CRITICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS

ESSAYS:

COLLECTED AND REPUBLISHED

(FIRST TIME, 1839; FINAL, 1869).

BY

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IN SEVEN VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
CHAPMAN AND HALL, 193 PICCADILLY

LONDON:
ROBSON AND SONS, PRINTERS, PANCRAS ROAD, N.W.

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MISCELLANIES.

JEAN PAUL FRIEDRICH RICHTER.[1]

[1827.]

DR. JOHNSON, it is said, when he first heard of Boswell's intention to write a life of him, announced, with decision enough, that, if he thought Boswell really meant to *write his* life, he would prevent it by *taking Boswell's!* That great authors should actually employ this preventive against bad biographers is a thing we would by no means recommend: but the truth is, that, rich as we are in Biography, a well-written Life is almost as rare as a well-spent one; and there are certainly many more men whose history deserves to be recorded, than persons willing and able to record it. But great men, like the old Egyptian kings, must all be tried after death, before they can be embalmed: and what, in truth, are these 'Sketches,' 'Anas,' 'Conversations,' 'Voices,' and the like, but the votes and pleadings of so many ill-informed advocates, jurors and judges; from whose conflict, however, we shall in the end have a true verdict? The worst of it is at the first; for weak eyes are precisely the fondest of glittering objects. Accordingly, no sooner does a great man depart, and leave his character as public property,

[1] EDINBURGH REVIEW, No. 91.—*Jean Paul Friedrich Richter's Leben, nebst Characteristik seiner Werke; von Heinrich Döring.* (Jean Paul Friedrich Richter's Life, with a Sketch of his Works; by Heinrich Döring.) Gotha; Hennings, 1826. 12mo, pp. 208.

than a crowd of little men rushes towards it. There they are gathered together, blinking up to it with such vision as they have, scanning it from afar, hovering round it this way and that, each cunningly endeavouring, by all arts, to catch some reflex of it in the little mirror of Himself; though, many times, this mirror is so twisted with convexities and concavities, and, indeed, so extremely small in size, that to expect any true image, or any image whatever from it, is out of the question.

Richter was much better-natured than Johnson; and took many provoking things with the spirit of a humorist and philosopher; nor can we think that so good a man, had he even foreseen this Work of Döring's, would have gone the length of assassinating him for it. Döring is a person we have known for several years, as a compiler, and translator, and ballad-monger; whose grand enterprise, however, is his *Gallery of Weimar Authors;* a series of strange little Biographies, beginning with Schiller, and already extending over Wieland and Herder;—now comprehending, probably by conquest, Klopstock also; and lastly, by a sort of *droit d'aubaine*, Jean Paul Friedrich Richter; neither of whom belonged to Weimar. Authors, it must be admitted, are happier than the old painter with his cocks: for they write, naturally and without fear of ridicule, the name of their work on the title-page; and thenceforth the purport and tendency of each volume remains indisputable. Döring is sometimes lucky in this privilege; otherwise his manner of composition, being so peculiar, might occasion difficulty now and then. Biographies, according to Döring's method, are a simple business. You first ascertain, from the Leipsic *Conversationslexicon*, or Jördens's *Poetical Lexicon*, or Flögel, or Koch, or other such *Compendium* or *Handbook*, the date and place of the proposed individual's birth, his parentage, trade, appointments, and the titles of his works; the date of his death you already know from the newspapers: this serves as a foundation for the edifice. You then go through his writings, and all other writings where he or his pursuits are treated of, and wherever you find a passage with his name in it, you cut it out, and carry it away. In this manner a mass of materials is collected, and the building now proceeds apace. Stone is laid on the top of stone, just as it comes to hand; a trowel or two of biographic mortar, if perfectly convenient, being spread in here and there, by way of cement; and so the strangest pile

suddenly arises; amorphous, pointing every way but to the zenith, here a block of granite, there a mass of pipeclay; till the whole finishes, when the materials are finished;—and you leave it standing to posterity, like some miniature Stonehenge, a perfect architectural enigma.

To speak without figure, this mode of life-writing has its disadvantages. For one thing, the composition cannot well be what the critics call harmonious: and, indeed, Herr Döring's transitions are often abrupt enough. The hero changes his object and occupation from page to page, often from sentence to sentence, in the most unaccountable way; a pleasure-journey, and a sickness of fifteen years, are dispatched with equal brevity; in a moment you find him married, and the father of three fine children. He dies no less suddenly;—he is studying as usual, writing poetry, receiving visits, full of life and business, when instantly some paragraph opens under him, like one of the trap-doors in the *Vision of Mirza*, and he drops, without note of preparation, into the shades below. Perhaps, indeed, not forever; we have instances of his rising after the funeral, and winding-up his affairs. The time has been that, when the brains were out, the man would die; but Döring orders these things differently.

After all, however, we have no pique against poor Döring: on the contrary, we regularly purchase his ware; and it gives us true pleasure to see his spirits so much improved since we first met him. In the *Life of Schiller* his state did seem rather unprosperous: he wore a timorous, submissive and downcast aspect, as if, like Sterne's Ass, he were saying, "Don't thrash me;—but if you will, you may!" Now, however, comforted by considerable sale, and praise from this and the other *Litteraturblatt*, which has commended his diligence, his fidelity, and, strange to say, his method, he advances with erect countenance and firm hoof, and even recalcitrates contemptuously against such as do him offence. *Glück auf dem Weg!* is the worst we wish him.

Of his *Life of Richter* these preliminary observations may be our excuse for saying but little. He brags much, in his Preface, that it is all true and genuine; for Richter's widow, it seems, had, by public advertisement, cautioned the world against it; another biography, partly by the illustrious deceased himself, partly by Otto, his oldest friend and the appointed

Editor of his Works, being actually in preparation. This rouses the indignant spirit of Döring, and he stoutly asseverates that, his documents being altogether authentic, this biography is *no* pseudo-biography. With still greater truth he might have asseverated that it was no biography at all. Well are he and Hennings of Gotha aware that this thing of shreds and patches has been vamped together for sale only. Except a few letters to Kunz, the Bamberg Bookseller, which turn mainly on the purchase of spectacles, and the journeyings and freightage of two boxes that used to pass and repass between Richter and Kunz's circulating library; with three or four notes of similar importance, and chiefly to other booksellers, there are no biographical documents here, which were not open to all Europe as well as to Heinrich Döring. Indeed, very nearly one half of the *Life* is occupied with a description of the funeral and its appendages,—how the 'sixty torches, with a number of lanterns and pitchpans,' were arranged; how this Patrician or Professor followed that, through Friedrich-street, Chancery-street, and other streets of Bayreuth; and how at last the torches all went out, as Dr. Gabler and Dr. Spatzier were perorating (decidedly in bombast) over the grave. Then, it seems, there were meetings held in various parts of Germany, to solemnise the memory of Richter; among the rest, one in the Museum of Frankfort-on-Mayn; where a Doctor Börne speaks another long speech, if possible in still more decided bombast. Next come threnodies from all the four winds, mostly on very splay-footed metre. The whole of which is here snatched from the kind oblivion of the newspapers, and 'lives in Settle's numbers one day more.'

We have too much reverence for the name of Richter to think of laughing over these unhappy threnodists and panegyrists; some of whom far exceed anything we English can exhibit in the epicedial style. They rather testify, however maladroitly, that the Germans have felt their loss,—which, indeed, is one to Europe at large; they even affect us with a certain melancholy feeling, when we consider how a heavenly voice must become mute, and nothing be heard in its stead but the whoop of quite earthly voices, lamenting, or pretending to lament. Far from us be all remembrance of Döring and Company, while we speak of Richter! But his own Works give us some glimpses into his singular and noble nature; and to our

readers a few words on this man, certainly one of the most remarkable of his age, will not seem thrown away.

Except by name, Jean Paul Friedrich Richter is little known out of Germany. The only thing connected with him, we think, that has reached this country, is his saying, imported by Madame de Staël, and thankfully pocketed by most newspaper critics :—'Providence has given to the French the empire of 'the land, to the English that of the sea, to the Germans that 'of—the air!' Of this last element, indeed, his own genius might easily seem to have been a denizen; so fantastic, many-coloured, far-grasping, everyway perplexed and extraordinary is his mode of writing. To translate him properly is next to impossible; nay, a dictionary of his works has actually been in part published for the use of German readers! These things have restricted his sphere of action, and may long restrict it, to his own country: but there, in return, he is a favourite of the first class; studied through all his intricacies with trustful admiration, and a love which tolerates much. During the last forty years, he has been continually before the public, in various capacities, and growing generally in esteem with all ranks of critics; till, at length, his gainsayers have either been silenced or convinced; and Jean Paul, at first reckoned half-mad, has long ago vindicated his singularities to nearly universal satisfaction, and now combines popularity with real depth of endowment, in perhaps a greater degree than any other writer; being second in the latter point to scarcely more than one of his contemporaries, and in the former second to none.

The biography of so distinguished a person could scarcely fail to be interesting, especially his autobiography; which, accordingly, we wait for, and may in time submit to our readers, if it seem worthy: meanwhile, the history of his life, so far as outward events characterise it, may be stated in a few words. He was born at Wunsiedel in Bayreuth, in March 1763. His father was a subaltern teacher in the Gymnasium of the place, and was afterwards promoted to be clergyman at Schwarzbach on the Saale. Richter's early education was of the scantiest sort; but his fine faculties and unwearied diligence supplied every defect. Unable to purchase books, he borrowed what he could come at, and transcribed from them, often great part of their contents,—a habit of excerpting which continued with

him through life, and influenced, in more than one way, his mode of writing and study. To the last, he was an insatiable and universal reader: so that his extracts accumulated on his hands, 'till they filled whole chests.' In 1780, he went to the University of Leipsic; with the highest character, in spite of the impediments which he had struggled with, for talent and acquirement. Like his father, he was destined for Theology; from which, however, his vagrant genius soon diverged into Poetry and Philosophy, to the neglect, and, ere long, to the final abandonment of his appointed profession. Not well knowing what to do, he now accepted a tutorship in some family of rank; then he had pupils in his own house,—which, however, like his way of life, he often changed; for by this time he had become an author, and, in his wanderings over Germany, was putting forth, now here, now there, the strangest books, with the strangest titles. For instance,—*Greenland Lawsuits;*—*Biographical Recreations under the Cranium of a Giantess;*—*Selection from the Papers of the Devil;*—and the like! In these indescribable performances, the splendid faculties of the writer, luxuriating as they seem in utter riot, could not be disputed; nor, with all its extravagance, the fundamental strength, honesty and tenderness of his nature. Genius will reconcile men to much. By degrees, Jean Paul began to be considered not a strange crackbrained mixture of enthusiast and buffoon, but a man of infinite humour, sensibility, force and penetration. His writings procured him friends and fame; and at length a wife and a settled provision. With Caroline Mayer, his good spouse, and a pension (in 1802) from the King of Bavaria, he settled in Bayreuth, the capital of his native province; where he lived thenceforth, diligent and celebrated in many new departments of Literature; and died on the 14th of November 1825, loved as well as admired by all his countrymen, and most by those who had known him most intimately.

A huge, irregular man, both in mind and person (for his Portrait is quite a physiognomical study), full of fire, strength and impetuosity, Richter seems, at the same time, to have been, in the highest degree, mild, simple-hearted, humane. He was fond of conversation, and might well shine in it: he talked, as he wrote, in a style of his own, full of wild strength and charms, to which his natural Bayreuth accent often gave additional effect. Yet he loved retirement, the country and all na-

tural things; from his youth upwards, he himself tells us, he may almost be said to have lived in the open air; it was among groves and meadows that he studied,—often that he wrote. Even in the streets of Bayreuth, we have heard, he was seldom seen without a flower in his breast. A man of quiet tastes, and warm compassionate affections! His friends he must have loved as few do. Of his poor and humble mother he often speaks by allusion, and never without reverence and overflowing tenderness. 'Unhappy is the man,' says he, 'for whom 'his own mother has not made all other mothers venerable!' And elsewhere: 'O thou who hast still a father and a mother, 'thank God for it in the day when thy soul is full of joyful 'tears, and needs a bosom wherein to shed them!'—We quote the following sentences from Döring, almost the only memorable thing he has written in this Volume:

'Richter's studying or sitting apartment offered, about this 'time (1793), a true and beautiful emblem of his simple and 'noble way of thought, which comprehended at once the high 'and the low. Whilst his mother, who then lived with him, 'busily pursued her household work, occupying herself about 'stove and dresser, Jean Paul was sitting in a corner of the 'same room, at a simple writing-desk, with few or no books 'about him, but merely with one or two drawers containing ex-'cerpts and manuscripts. The jingle of the household opera-'tions seemed not at all to disturb him, any more than did the 'cooing of the pigeons, which fluttered to and fro in the cham-'ber,—a place, indeed, of considerable size.'[2]

Our venerable Hooker, we remember, also enjoyed 'the jingle of household operations,' and the more questionable jingle of shrewd tongues to boot, while he wrote; but the good thrifty mother, and the cooing pigeons, were wanting. Richter came afterwards to live in finer mansions, and had the great and learned for associates; but the gentle feelings of those days abode with him: through life he was the same substantial, determinate, yet meek and tolerating man. It is seldom that so much rugged energy can be so blandly attempered; that so much vehemence and so much softness will go together.

The expected Edition of Richter's Works is to be in sixty volumes; and they are no less multifarious than extensive; embracing subjects of all sorts, from the highest problems of Tran-

[2] Page 8.

scendental Philosophy, and the most passionate poetical delineations, to *Golden Rules for the Weather-Prophet*, and instructions in the *Art of Falling Asleep*. His chief productions are Novels: the *Unsichtbare Loge* (Invisible Lodge); *Flegeljahre* (Wild-Oats); *Life of Fixlein;* the *Jubelsenior* (Parson in Jubilee); *Schmelzle's Journey to Flätz; Katzenberger's Journey to the Bath; Life of Fibel;* with many lighter pieces; and two works of a higher order, *Hesperus* and *Titan*, the largest and the best of his Novels. It was the former that first (in 1795) introduced him into decisive and universal estimation with his countrymen: the latter he himself, with the most judicious of his critics, regarded as his masterpiece. But the name Novelist, as we in England must understand it, would ill describe so vast and discursive a genius: for, with all his grotesque, tumultuous pleasantry, Richter is a man of a truly earnest, nay high and solemn character; and seldom writes without a meaning far beyond the sphere of common romancers. *Hesperus* and *Titan* themselves, though in form nothing more than 'novels of real life,' as the Minerva Press would say, have solid metal enough in them to furnish whole circulating libraries, were it beaten into the usual filigree; and much which, attenuate it as we might, no quarterly subscriber could well carry with him. Amusement is often, in part almost always, a mean with Richter; rarely or never his highest end. His thoughts, his feelings, the creations of his spirit, walk before us embodied under wondrous shapes, in motley and ever-fluctuating groups; but his essential character, however he disguise it, is that of a Philosopher and moral Poet, whose study has been human nature, whose delight and best endeavour are with all that is beautiful, and tender, and mysteriously sublime, in the fate or history of man. This is the purport of his writings, whether their form be that of fiction or of truth; the spirit that pervades and ennobles his delineations of common life, his wild wayward dreams, allegories, and shadowy imaginings, no less than his disquisitions of a nature directly scientific.

But in this latter province also Richter has accomplished much. His *Vorschule der Aesthetik* (Introduction to Æsthetics[3])

[3] From *αἰσθάνομαι, to feel.* A word invented by Baumgarten (some eighty years ago), to express generally the *Science of the Fine Arts;* and now in universal use among the Germans. Perhaps we also might as well adopt it; at least if any such *science* should ever arise among us.

is a work on Poetic Art, based on principles of no ordinary depth and compass, abounding in noble views, and, notwithstanding its frolicsome exuberance, in sound and subtle criticism; esteemed even in Germany, where criticism has long been treated of as a science, and by such persons as Winkelmann, Kant, Herder, and the Schlegels. Of this work we could speak long, did our limits allow. We fear it might astonish many an honest brother of our craft, were he to read it; and altogether perplex and dash his maturest counsels, if he chanced to understand it.—Richter has also written on Education, a work entitled *Levana;* distinguished by keen practical sagacity, as well as generous sentiment, and a certain sober magnificence of speculation; the whole presented in that singular style which characterises the man. Germany is rich in works on Education; richer at present than any other country: it is there only that some echo of the Lockes and Miltons, speaking of this high matter, may still be heard; and speaking of it in the language of our own time, with insight into the actual wants, advantages, perils and prospects of this age. Among the writers on this subject Richter holds a high place; if we look chiefly at his tendency and aims, perhaps the highest.—The *Clavis Fichtiana* is a ludicrous performance, known to us only by report; but Richter is said to possess the merit, while he laughs at Fichte, of understanding him; a merit among Fichte's critics which seems to be one of the rarest. Report also, we regret to say, is all that we know of the *Campaner Thal*, a Discourse on the Immortality of the Soul; one of Richter's beloved topics, or rather the life of his whole philosophy, glimpses of which look forth on us from almost every one of his writings. He died while engaged, under recent and almost total blindness, in enlarging and remodelling this *Campaner Thal;* the unfinished manuscript was borne upon his coffin to the burial vault: and Klopstock's hymn, '*Auferstehen wirst du*, Thou shalt arise, my soul,' can seldom have been sung with more appropriate application than over the grave of Jean Paul.

We defy the most careless or prejudiced reader to peruse these works without an impression of something splendid, wonderful and daring. But they require to be studied as well as read, and this with no ordinary patience, if the reader, especially the foreign reader, wishes to comprehend rightly either

their truth or their want of truth. Tried by many an accepted standard, Richter would be speedily enough disposed of; pronounced a mystic, a German dreamer, a rash and presumptuous innovator; and so consigned, with equanimity, perhaps with a certain jubilee, to the Limbo appointed for all such windbags and deceptions. Originality is a thing we constantly clamour for, and constantly quarrel with; as if, observes our Author himself, any originality but our own could be expected to content us! In fact, all strange things are apt, without fault of theirs, to estrange us at first view; unhappily scarcely anything is perfectly plain, but what is also perfectly common. The current coin of the realm passes into all hands; and be it gold, silver, or copper, is acceptable and of known value: but with new ingots, with foreign bars, and medals of Corinthian brass, the case is widely different.

There are few writers with whom deliberation and careful distrust of first impressions are more necessary than with Richter. He is a phenomenon from the very surface; he presents himself with a professed and determined singularity: his language itself is a stone of stumbling to the critic; to critics of the grammarian species, an unpardonable, often an insuperable rock of offence. Not that he is ignorant of grammar, or disdains the sciences of spelling and parsing; but he exercises both in a certain latitudinarian spirit; deals with astonishing liberality in parentheses, dashes, and subsidiary clauses; invents hundreds of new words, alters old ones, or by hyphen chains and pairs and packs them together into most jarring combination; in short, produces sentences of the most heterogeneous, lumbering, interminable kind. Figures without limit; indeed the whole is one tissue of metaphors, and similes, and allusions to all the provinces of Earth, Sea and Air; interlaced with epigrammatic breaks, vehement bursts, or sardonic turns, interjections, quips, puns, and even oaths! A perfect Indian jungle it seems; a boundless, unparalleled imbroglio; nothing on all sides but darkness, dissonance, confusion worse confounded! Then the style of the whole corresponds, in perplexity and extravagance, with that of the parts. Every work, be it fiction or serious treatise, is embaled in some fantastic wrappage, some mad narrative accounting for its appearance, and connecting it with the author, who generally becomes a person in the drama himself, before all is over. He has a whole

imaginary geography of Europe in his novels; the cities of Flachsenfingen, Haarhaar, Scheerau, and so forth, with their princes, and privy-councillors, and serene highnesses; most of whom, odd enough fellows everyway, are Richter's private acquaintances, talk with him of state matters (in the purest Tory dialect), and often incite him to get on with his writing. No story proceeds without the most erratic digressions, and voluminous tagrags rolling after it in many a snaky twine. Ever and anon there occurs some 'Extra-leaf,' with its satirical petition, program, or other wonderful intercalation, no mortal can foresee on what. It is, indeed, a mighty maze; and often the panting reader toils after him in vain; or, baffled and spent, indignantly stops short, and retires, perhaps forever.

All this, we must admit, is true of Richter; but much more is true also. Let us not turn from him after the first cursory glance, and imagine we have settled his account by the words Rhapsody and Affectation. They are cheap words, and of sovereign potency; we should see, therefore, that they be not rashly applied. Many things in Richter accord ill with such a theory. There are rays of the keenest truth, nay steady pillars of scientific light rising through this chaos: Is it in fact a chaos; or may it be that our eyes are of finite, not of infinite vision, and have only missed the plan? Few 'rhapsodists' are men of science, of solid learning, of rigorous study, and accurate, extensive, nay universal knowledge; as he is. With regard to affectation also, there is much to be said. The essence of affectation is that it be *assumed:* the character is, as it were, forcibly crushed into some foreign mould, in the hope of being thereby reshaped and beautified; the unhappy man persuades himself that he has in truth become a new creature, of the wonderfulest symmetry; and so he moves about with a conscious air, though every movement betrays not symmetry but dislocation. This it is to be affected, to walk in a vain show. But the strangeness alone is no proof of the vanity. Many men that move smoothly in the old-established railways of custom will be found to have their affectation; and perhaps here and there some divergent genius be accused of it unjustly. The *show*, though common, may not cease to be *vain;* nor become so for being uncommon. Before we censure a man for seeming what he is not, we should be sure that we know what he *is*. As to Richter in particular, we cannot but observe, that, strange and

tumultuous as he is, there is a certain benign composure visible in his writings; a mercy, a gladness, a reverence, united in such harmony as bespeaks not a false, but a genuine state of mind; not a feverish and morbid, but a healthy and robust state.

The secret of the matter is, that Richter requires more study than most readers care to give him. As we approach more closely, many things grow clearer. In the man's own sphere there is consistency; the farther we advance into it, we see confusion more and more unfold itself into order, till at last, viewed from its proper centre, his intellectual universe, no longer a distorted incoherent series of air-landscapes, coalesces into compact expansion; a vast, magnificent, and variegated scene; full of wondrous products; rude, it may be, and irregular; but gorgeous, benignant, great; gay with the richest verdure and foliage, glittering in the brightest and kindest sun.

Richter has been called an intellectual Colossus; and in truth it is somewhat in this light that we view him. His faculties are all of gigantic mould; cumbrous, awkward in their movements; large and splendid, rather than harmonious or beautiful; yet joined in living union; and of force and compass altogether extraordinary. He has an intellect vehement, rugged, irresistible; crushing in pieces the hardest problems; piercing into the most hidden combinations of things, and grasping the most distant: an imagination vague, sombre, splendid, or appalling; brooding over the abysses of Being; wandering through Infinitude, and summoning before us, in its dim religious light, shapes of brilliancy, solemnity, or terror: a fancy of exuberance literally unexampled; for it pours its treasures with a lavishness which knows no limit, hanging, like the sun, a jewel on every grass-blade, and sowing the earth at large with orient pearl. But deeper than all these lies Humour, the ruling quality with Richter; as it were the central fire that pervades and vivifies his whole being. He is a humorist from his inmost soul; he thinks as a humorist, he feels, imagines, acts as a humorist: Sport is the element in which his nature lives and works. A tumultuous element for such a nature, and wild work he makes in it! A Titan in his sport as in his earnestness, he oversteps all bound, and riots without law or measure. He heaps Pelion upon Ossa, and hurls the universe together and asunder like a case of playthings. The Moon 'bombards' the Earth, being

a rebellious satellite; Mars 'preaches' to the other planets, very singular doctrine; nay, we have Time and Space themselves playing fantastic tricks: it is an infinite masquerade; all Nature is gone forth mumming in the strangest guises.

Yet the anarchy is not without its purpose: these vizards are not mere hollow masks; there are living faces under them, and this mumming has its significance. Richter is a man of mirth, but he seldom or never condescends to be a merry-andrew. Nay, in spite of its extravagance, we should say that his humour is of all his gifts intrinsically the finest and most genuine. It has such witching turns; there is something in it so capricious, so quaint, so heartfelt. From his Cyclopean workshop, and its fuliginous limbecs, and huge unwieldy machinery, the little shrivelled twisted Figure comes forth at last, so perfect and so living, to be forever laughed at and forever loved! Wayward as he seems, he works not without forethought: like Rubens, by a single stroke he can change a laughing face into a sad one. But in his smile itself a touching pathos may lie hidden, a pity too deep for tears. He is a man of feeling, in the noblest sense of that word; for he loves all living with the heart of a brother; his soul rushes forth, in sympathy with gladness and sorrow, with goodness or grandeur, over all Creation. Every gentle and generous affection, every thrill of mercy, every glow of nobleness, awakens in his bosom a response; nay strikes his spirit into harmony; a wild music as of wind-harps, floating round us in fitful swells, but soft sometimes, and pure and soul-entrancing, as the song of angels! Aversion itself with him is not hatred; he despises much, but justly, with tolerance also, with placidity, and even a sort of love. Love, in fact, is the atmosphere he breathes in, the medium through which he looks. His is the spirit which gives life and beauty to whatever it embraces. Inanimate Nature itself is no longer an insensible assemblage of colours and perfumes, but a mysterious Presence, with which he communes in unutterable sympathies. We might call him, as he once called Herder, 'a Priest of Nature, a mild Bramin,' wandering amid spicy groves, and under benignant skies. The infinite Night with her solemn aspects, Day, and the sweet approach of Even and Morn, are full of meaning for him. He loves the green Earth with her streams and forests, her flowery leas and eternal skies; loves her with a sort of passion, in all her vicissitudes of light

and shade; his spirit revels in her grandeur and charms; expands like the breeze over wood and lawn, over glade and dingle, stealing and giving odours.

It has sometimes been made a wonder that things so discordant should go together; that men of humour are often likewise men of sensibility. But the wonder should rather be to see them divided; to find true genial humour dwelling in a mind that was coarse or callous. The essence of humour is sensibility; warm, tender fellow-feeling with all forms of existence. Nay, we may say that unless seasoned and purified by humour, sensibility is apt to run wild; will readily corrupt into disease, falsehood, or, in one word, sentimentality. Witness Rousseau, Zimmermann, in some points also St. Pierre: to say nothing of living instances; or of the Kotzebues, and other pale host of woe-begone mourners, whose wailings, like the howl of an Irish wake, have from time to time cleft the general ear. 'The last perfection of our faculties,' says Schiller with a truth far deeper than it seems, 'is that their activity, without ceasing to be sure and earnest, become *sport*.' True humour is sensibility, in the most catholic and deepest sense; but it is this *sport* of sensibility; wholesome and perfect therefore; as it were, the playful teasing fondness of a mother to her child.

That faculty of irony, of caricature, which often passes by the name of humour, but consists chiefly in a certain superficial distortion or reversal of objects, and ends at best in laughter, bears no resemblance to the humour of Richter. A shallow endowment this; and often more a habit than an endowment. It is but a poor fraction of humour; or rather, it is the body to which the soul is wanting; any life it has being false, artificial and irrational. True humour springs not more from the head than from the heart; it is not contempt, its essence is love; it issues not in laughter, but in still smiles, which lie far deeper. It is a sort of inverse sublimity; exalting, as it were, into our affections what is below us, while sublimity draws down into our affections what is above us. The former is scarcely less precious or heart-affecting than the latter; perhaps it is still rarer, and, as a test of genius, still more decisive. It is, in fact, the bloom and perfume, the purest effluence of a deep, fine and loving nature; a nature in harmony with itself, reconciled to the world and its stintedness and contradiction, nay finding in this very contradiction new elements of beauty as well as good-

ness. Among our own writers, Shakspeare, in this as in all other provinces, must have his place: yet not the first; his humour is heartfelt, exuberant, warm, but seldom the tenderest or most subtle. Swift inclines more to simple irony; yet he had genuine humour too, and of no unloving sort, though cased, like Ben Jonson's, in a most bitter and caustic rind. Sterne follows next; our last specimen of humour, and, with all his faults, our best; our finest, if not our strongest; for *Yorick* and *Corporal Trim* and *Uncle Toby* have yet no brother but in *Don Quixote*, far as *he* lies above them. Cervantes is indeed the purest of all humorists; so gentle and genial, so full yet so ethereal is his humour, and in such accordance with itself and his whole noble nature. The Italian mind is said to abound in humour; yet their classics seem to give us no right emblem of it: except perhaps in Ariosto, there appears little in their current poetry that reaches the region of true humour. In France, since the days of Montaigne, it seems to be nearly extinct. Voltaire, much as he dealt in ridicule, never rises into humour; even with Molière, it is far more an affair of the understanding than of the character.

That, in this point, Richter excels all German authors, is saying much for him, and may be said truly. Lessing has humour,—of a sharp, rigid, substantial, and, on the whole, genial sort; yet the ruling bias of his mind is to logic. So likewise has Wieland, though much diluted by the general *loquacity* of his nature, and impoverished still farther by the influences of a cold, meagre, French scepticism. Among the Ramlers, Gellerts, Hagedorns, of Frederick the Second's time, we find abundance, and delicate in kind too, of that light matter which the French call pleasantry; but little or nothing that deserves the name of humour. In the present age, however, there is Goethe, with a rich true vein; and this sublimated, as it were, to an essence, and blended in still union with his whole mind. Tieck also, among his many fine susceptibilities, is not without a warm keen sense for the ridiculous; and a humour rising, though by short fits, and from a much lower atmosphere, to be poetic. But of all these men, there is none that, in depth, copiousness and intensity of humour, can be compared with Jean Paul. He alone exists in humour; lives, moves and has his being in it. With him it is not so much united to his other qualities, of intellect, fancy, imagination, moral feeling, as these are united to

it; or rather unite themselves to it, and grow under its warmth, as in their proper temperature and climate. Not as if we meant to assert that his humour is in all cases perfectly natural and pure; nay, that it is not often extravagant, untrue, or even absurd: but still, on the whole, the core and life of it are genuine, subtle, spiritual. Not without reason have his panegyrists named him '*Jean Paul der Einzige*, Jean Paul the Unique:' in one sense or the other, either as praise or censure, his critics also must adopt this epithet; for surely, in the whole circle of Literature, we look in vain for his parallel. Unite the sportfulness of Rabelais, and the best sensibility of Sterne, with the earnestness, and, even in slight portions, the sublimity of Milton; and let the mosaic brain of old Burton give forth the workings of this strange union, with the pen of Jeremy Bentham!

To say how, with so peculiar a natural endowment, Richter should have shaped his mind by culture, is much harder than to say that he has shaped it wrong. Of affectation we will neither altogether clear him, nor very loudly pronounce him guilty. That his manner of writing is singular, nay in fact a wild complicated Arabesque, no one can deny. But the true question is, How nearly does this manner of writing represent his real manner of thinking and existing? With what degree of freedom does it allow this particular form of being to manifest itself; or what fetters and perversions does it lay on such manifestation? For the great law of culture is: Let each become all that he was created capable of being; expand, if possible, to his full growth; resisting all impediments, casting off all foreign, especially all noxious adhesions; and show himself at length in his own shape and stature, be these what they may. There is no uniform of excellence, either in physical or spiritual Nature: all *genuine* things are what they ought to be. The reindeer is good and beautiful, so likewise is the elephant. In Literature it is the same: 'every man,' says Lessing, 'has his own style, like his own nose.' True, there are noses of wonderful dimensions; but no nose can justly be amputated by the public,—not even the nose of Slawkenbergius himself; so it *be* a real nose, and no wooden one put on for deception's sake and mere show!

To speak in grave language, Lessing means, and we agree with him, that the outward style is to be judged of by the inward qualities of the spirit which it is employed to body forth;

that, without prejudice to critical propriety well understood, the former may vary into many shapes as the latter varies; that, in short, the grand point for a writer is not to be of this or that external make and fashion, but, in every fashion, to be genuine, vigorous, alive, — alive with his whole being, consciously, and for beneficent results.

Tried by this test, we imagine Richter's wild manner will be found less imperfect than many a very tame one. To the man it may not be unsuitable. In that singular form there is a fire, a splendour, a benign energy, which persuades us into tolerance, nay into love, of much that might otherwise offend. Above all, this man, alloyed with imperfections as he may be, is consistent and coherent: he is at one with himself; he knows his aims, and pursues them in sincerity of heart, joyfully and with undivided will. A harmonious development of being, the first and last object of all true culture, has been obtained; if not completely, at least more completely than in one of a thousand ordinary men. Nor let us forget that, in such a nature, it was not of easy attainment; that where much was to be developed, some imperfection should be forgiven. It is true, the beaten paths of Literature lead the safeliest to the goal; and the talent pleases us most, which submits to shine with new gracefulness through old forms. Nor is the noblest and most peculiar mind too noble or peculiar for working by prescribed laws: Sophocles, Shakspeare, Cervantes, and in Richter's own age, Goethe, how little did they innovate on the given forms of composition, how much in the spirit they breathed into them! All this is true; and Richter must lose of our esteem in proportion. Much, however, will remain; and why should we quarrel with the high, because it is not the highest? Richter's worst faults are nearly allied to his best merits; being chiefly exuberance of good, irregular squandering of wealth, a dazzling with excess of true light. These things may be pardoned the more readily, as they are little likely to be imitated.

On the whole, Genius has privileges of its own; it selects an orbit for itself; and be this never so eccentric, if it is indeed a celestial orbit, we mere stargazers must at last compose ourselves; must cease to cavil at it, and begin to observe it, and calculate its laws. That Richter is a new Planet in the intellectual heavens, we dare not affirm; an atmospheric Meteor he is not wholly; perhaps a Comet, that, though with long

aberrations, and shrouded in a nebulous veil, has yet its place in the empyrean.

Of Richter's individual Works, of his opinions, his general philosophy of life, we have no room left us to speak. Regarding his Novels, we may say, that, except in some few instances, and those chiefly of the shorter class, they are not what, in strict language, we can term unities: with much *callida junctura* of parts, it is rare that any of them leaves on us the impression of a perfect, homogeneous, indivisible whole. A true work of art requires to be *fused* in the mind of its creator, and, as it were, poured forth (from his imagination, though not from his pen) at one simultaneous gush. Richter's works do not always bear sufficient marks of having been in *fusion;* yet neither are they merely *riveted* together; to say the least, they have been *welded.* A similar remark applies to many of his characters; indeed, more or less to all of them, except such as are entirely humorous, or have a large dash of humour. In this latter province he is at home; a true poet, a maker; his *Siebenkäs,* his *Schmelzle,* even his *Fibel* and *Fixlein* are living figures. But in heroic personages, passionate, massive, overpowering as he is, we have scarcely ever a complete ideal; art has not attained to the concealment of itself. With his heroines again he is more successful; they are often true heroines, though perhaps with too little variety of character; bustling, buxom mothers and housewives, with all the caprices, perversities, and warm generous helpfulness of women; or white, half-angelic creatures, meek, still, long-suffering, high-minded, of tenderest affections, and hearts crushed yet uncomplaining. Supernatural figures he has not attempted; and wisely, for he cannot write without belief. Yet many times he exhibits an imagination of a singularity, nay on the whole, of a truth and grandeur, unexampled elsewhere. In his *Dreams* there is a mystic complexity, a gloom, and amid the dim gigantic half-ghastly shadows, gleamings of a wizard splendour, which almost recall to us the visions of Ezekiel. By readers who have studied the *Dream in the New-year's Eve* we shall not be mistaken.

Richter's Philosophy, a matter of no ordinary interest both as it agrees with the common philosophy of Germany and disagrees with it, must not be touched on for the present. One only observation we shall make: it is not mechanical, or scep-

tical; it springs not from the forum or the laboratory, but from the depths of the human spirit; and yields as its fairest product a noble system of Morality, and the firmest conviction of Religion. In this latter point we reckon him peculiarly worthy of study. To a careless reader he might seem the wildest of infidels; for nothing can exceed the freedom with which he bandies to and fro the dogmas of religion, nay, sometimes, the highest objects of Christian reverence. There are passages of this sort, which will occur to every reader of Richter; but which, not to fall into the error we have already blamed in Madame de Staël, we shall refrain from quoting. More light is in the following: 'Or,' inquires he, in his usual abrupt way, 'Or are 'all your Mosques, Episcopal Churches, Pagodas, Chapels of 'Ease, Tabernacles, and Pantheons, anything else but the 'Ethnic Forecourt of the Invisible Temple and its Holy of 'Holies?'[4] Yet, independently of all dogmas, nay perhaps in spite of many, Richter is, in the highest sense of the word, religious. A reverence, not a self-interested fear, but a noble reverence for the spirit of all goodness, forms the crown and glory of his culture. The fiery elements of his nature have been purified under holy influences, and chastened by a principle of mercy and humility into peace and well-doing. An intense and continual faith in man's immortality and native grandeur accompanies him; from amid the vortices of life he looks up to a heavenly loadstar; the solution of what is visible and transient, he finds in what is invisible and eternal. He has doubted, he denies, yet he believes. 'When, in your last 'hour,' says he,[5] 'when, in your last hour (think of this), all 'faculty in the broken spirit shall fade away and die into in-'anity,—imagination, thought, effort, enjoyment,—then at last 'will the night-flower of Belief alone continue blooming, and 'refresh with its perfumes in the last darkness.'

To reconcile these seeming contradictions, to explain the grounds, the manner, the congruity of Richter's belief, cannot be attempted here. We recommend him to the study, the tolerance, and even the praise, of all men who have inquired into this highest of questions with a right spirit; inquired with the martyr fearlessness, but also with the martyr reverence, of men that love Truth, and will not accept a lie. A frank, fearless, honest, yet truly spiritual faith is of all things the rarest in our time.

[4] Note to *Schmelzle's Journey*. [5] *Levana*, p. 251.

Of writings which, though with many reservations, we have praised so much, our hesitating readers may demand some specimen. To unbelievers, unhappily, we have none of a convincing sort to give. Ask us not to represent the Peruvian forests by three twigs plucked from them; or the cataracts of the Nile by a handful of its water! To those, meanwhile, who will look on twigs as mere dissevered twigs, and a handful of water as only so many drops, we present the following. It is a summer Sunday night; Jean Paul is taking leave of the Hukelum Parson and his Wife; like him we have long laughed at them or wept for them; like him, also, we are sad to part from them:

'We were all of us too deeply moved. We at last tore ourselves asunder from repeated embraces; my friend retired with the soul whom he loves. I remained alone behind with the Night.

'And I walked without aim through woods, through valleys, and over brooks, and through sleeping villages, to enjoy the great Night, like a Day. I walked, and still looked, like the magnet, to the region of midnight, to strengthen my heart at the gleaming twilight, at this upstretching aurora of a morning beneath our feet. White night-butterflies flitted, white blossoms fluttered, white stars fell, and the white snow-powder hung silvery in the high Shadow of the Earth, which reaches beyond the Moon, and which is our Night. Then began the Æolian Harp of the Creation to tremble and to sound, blown on from above; and my immortal Soul was a string in that Harp.—The heart of a brother, everlasting Man, swelled under the everlasting heaven, as the seas swell under the sun and under the moon.—The distant village-clocks struck midnight, mingling, as it were, with the ever-pealing tone of ancient Eternity.—The limbs of my buried ones touched cold on my soul, and drove away its blots, as dead hands heal eruptions of the skin.—I walked silently through little hamlets, and close by their outer churchyards, where crumbled upcast coffin-boards were glimmering, while the once-bright eyes that had lain in them were mouldered into gray ashes. Cold thought! clutch not like a cold spectre at my heart: I look up to the starry sky, and an everlasting chain stretches thither, and over, and below; and all is Life, and Warmth, and Light, and all is Godlike or God. . . .

'Towards morning I descried thy late lights, little city of my dwelling, which I belong to on this side the grave; I returned to the Earth; and in thy steeples, behind the by-advanced great midnight, it struck half-past two: about this hour, in 1794, Mars went down in the west, and the Moon rose in the east; and my soul desired, in grief for the noble warlike blood which is still streaming on the blossoms of Spring: "Ah, retire, bloody War, like red Mars; and thou, still Peace, come forth like the mild divided Moon."'[6]

[6] End of *Quintus Fixlein*.

Such, seen through no uncoloured medium, but in dim remoteness, and sketched in hurried transitory outline, are some features of Jean Paul Friedrich Richter and his Works. Germany has long loved him ; to England also he must one day become known ; for a man of this magnitude belongs not to one people, but to the world. What our countrymen may decide of him, still more what may be his fortune with posterity, we will not try to foretell. Time has a strange contracting influence on many a wide-spread fame ; yet of Richter we will say, that he may survive much. There is in him that which does not die ; that Beauty and Earnestness of soul, that spirit of Humanity, of Love and mild Wisdom, over which the vicissitudes of mode have no sway. This is that excellence of the inmost nature which alone confers immortality on writings; that charm which still, under every defacement, binds us to the pages of our own Hookers, and Taylors, and Brownes, when their way of thought has long ceased to be ours, and the most valued of their merely intellectual opinions have passed away, as ours too must do, with the circumstances and events in which they took their shape or rise. To men of a right mind there may long be in Richter much that has attraction and value. In the moral desert of vulgar Literature, with its sandy wastes, and parched, bitter and too often poisonous shrubs, the Writings of this man will rise in their irregular luxuriance, like a cluster of date-trees, with its greensward and well of water, to refresh the pilgrim, in the sultry solitude, with nourishment and shade.

STATE OF GERMAN LITERATURE.[1]

[1827.]

THESE two Books, notwithstanding their diversity of title, are properly parts of one and the same; the *Outlines*, though of prior date in regard to publication, having now assumed the character of sequel and conclusion to the larger Work,—of fourth volume to the other three. It is designed, of course, for the home market; yet the foreign student also will find in it a safe and valuable help, and, in spite of its imperfections, should receive it with thankfulness and goodwill. Doubtless we might have wished for a keener discriminative and descriptive talent, and perhaps for a somewhat more catholic spirit, in the writer of such a history; but in their absence we have still much to praise. Horn's literary creed would, on the whole, we believe, be acknowledged by his countrymen as the true one; and this, though it is chiefly from one immovable station that he can survey his subject, he seems heartily anxious to apply with candour and tolerance. Another improvement might have been, a deeper principle of arrangement, a firmer grouping into periods and schools; for, as it stands, the work is more a critical sketch of German Poets, than a history of German Poetry.

Let us not quarrel, however, with our author; his merits as a literary historian are plain, and by no means inconsiderable. Without rivalling the almost frightful laboriousness of Bouterwek or Eichhorn, he gives creditable proofs of research and general information, and possesses a lightness in compo-

[1] EDINBURGH REVIEW, No. 92.—1. *Die Poesie und Beredsamkeit der Deutschen, von Luthers Zeit bis zur Gegenwart. Dargestellt von Franz Horn.* (The Poetry and Oratory of the Germans, from Luther's Time to the Present. Exhibited by Franz Horn.) Berlin, 1822, '23, '24. 3 vols. 8vo.

2. *Umrisse zur Geschichte und Kritik der schönen Litteratur Deutschlands während der Jahre* 1790-1818. (Outlines for the History and Criticism of Polite Literature in Germany, during the Years 1790-1818.) By Franz Horn. Berlin, 1819. 8vo.

sition, to which neither of these erudite persons can well pretend. Undoubtedly he has a flowing pen, and is at home in this province; not only a speaker of the word, indeed, but a doer of the work; having written, besides his great variety of tracts and treatises, biographical, philosophical and critical, several very deserving works of a poetic sort. He is not, it must be owned, a very strong man, but he is nimble and orderly, and goes through his work with a certain gaiety of heart; nay, at times, with a frolicsome alacrity which might even require to be pardoned. His character seems full of susceptibility; perhaps too much so for its natural vigour. His novels, accordingly, to judge from the few we have read of them, verge towards the sentimental. In the present Work, in like manner, he has adopted nearly all the best ideas of his contemporaries, but with something of an undue vehemence; and he advocates the cause of religion, integrity and true poetic taste with great heartiness and vivacity, were it not that too often his zeal outruns his prudence and insight. Thus, for instance, he declares repeatedly, in so many words, that no mortal can be a poet unless he is a Christian. The meaning here is very good; but why this phraseology? Is it not inviting the simple-minded (not to speak of scoffers, whom Horn very justly sniffs at) to ask, When Homer subscribed the Thirty-nine Articles; or Whether Sadi and Hafiz were really of the Bishop of Peterborough's opinion? Again, he talks too often of 'representing the Infinite in the Finite,' of expressing the unspeakable, and such high matters. In fact, Horn's style, though extremely readable, has one great fault; it is, to speak it in a single word, an affected style. His stream of meaning, uniformly clear and wholesome in itself, will not flow quietly along its channel; but is ever and anon spurting itself up into epigrams and antithetic jets. Playful he is, and kindly, and, we do believe, honest-hearted; but there is a certain snappishness in him, a frisking abruptness; and then his sport is more a perpetual giggle, than any dignified smile, or even any sufficient laugh with gravity succeeding it. This sentence is among the best we recollect of him, and will partly illustrate what we mean. We submit it, for the sake of its import likewise, to all superfine speculators on the Reformation, in their future contrasts of Luther and Erasmus. 'Erasmus,' says Horn, 'belongs to that species of writers who have all the desire in the

'world to build God Almighty a magnificent church,—at the 'same time, however, not giving the Devil any offence; to 'whom, accordingly, they set up a neat little chapel close by, 'where you can offer him some touch of sacrifice at a time, 'and practise a quiet household devotion for him without dis-'turbance.' In this style of 'witty and conceited mirth,' considerable part of the book is written.

But our chief business at present is not with Franz Horn, or his book; of whom, accordingly, recommending his labours to all inquisitive students of German, and himself to good estimation with all good men, we must here take leave. We have a word or two to say on that strange Literature itself; concerning which our readers probably feel more curious to learn what it is, than with what skill it has been judged of.

Above a century ago, the Père Bouhours propounded to himself the pregnant question: *Si un Allemand peut avoir de l'esprit?* Had the Père Bouhours bethought him of what country Kepler and Leibnitz were, or who it was that gave to mankind the three great elements of modern civilisation, Gunpowder, Printing and the Protestant Religion, it might have thrown light on his inquiry. Had he known the *Nibelungen Lied*, and where *Reinecke Fuchs*, and *Faust*, and the *Ship of Fools*, and four-fifths of all the popular mythology, humour and romance to be found in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, took its rise; had he read a page or two of Ulrich Hutten, Opitz, Paul Flemming, Logau, or even Lohenstein and Hoffmannswaldau, all of whom had already lived and written in his day; had the Père Bouhours taken this trouble,—who knows but he might have found, with whatever amazement, that a German *could* actually have a little *esprit*, or perhaps even something better? No such trouble was requisite for the Père Bouhours. Motion *in vacuo* is well known to be speedier and surer than through a resisting medium, especially to imponderous bodies; and so the light Jesuit, unimpeded by facts or principles of any kind, failed not to reach his conclusion; and, in a comfortable frame of mind, to decide, negatively, that a German could *not* have any literary talent.

Thus did the Père Bouhours evince that he had a pleasant wit; but in the end he has paid dear for it. The French

themselves, have long since begun to know something of the Germans, and something also of their own critical Daniel; and now it is by this one *un*timely joke that the hapless Jesuit is doomed to live; for the blessing of full oblivion is denied him, and so he hangs, suspended in his own noose, over the dusky pool, which he struggles toward, but for a great while will not reach. Might his fate but serve as a warning to kindred men of wit, in regard to this and so many other subjects! For surely the pleasure of despising, at all times and in itself a dangerous luxury, is much safer *after* the toil of examining than before it.

We altogether differ from the Père Bouhours in this matter, and must endeavour to discuss it differently. There is, in fact, much in the present aspect of German Literature, not only deserving notice but deep consideration from all thinking men, and far too complex for being handled in the way of epigram. It is always advantageous to think justly of our neighbours: nay, in mere common honesty, it is a duty; and, like every other duty, brings its own reward. Perhaps at the present era this duty is more essential than ever; an era of such promise and such threatening, when so many elements of good and evil are everywhere in conflict, and human society is, as it were, struggling to body itself forth anew, and so many *coloured rays* are springing up in this quarter and in that, which only by their union can produce *pure light*. Happily, too, though still a difficult, it is no longer an impossible duty; for the commerce in material things has paved roads for commerce in things spiritual, and a true thought, or a noble creation, passes lightly to us from the remotest countries, provided only our minds be open to receive it. This, indeed, is a rigorous proviso, and a great obstacle lies in it; one which to many must be insurmountable, yet which it is the chief glory of social culture to surmount. For, if a man who mistakes his own contracted individuality for the type of human nature, and deals with whatever contradicts *him* as if it contradicted *this*, is but a pedant, and without true wisdom, be he furnished with partial equipments as he may,—what better shall we think of a nation that, in like manner, isolates itself from foreign influence, regards its own modes as so many laws of nature, and rejects all that is different as unworthy even of examination?

Of this narrow and perverted condition, the French, down

almost to our own times, have afforded a remarkable and instructive example; as indeed of late they have been often enough upbraidingly reminded, and are now themselves, in a manlier spirit, beginning to admit. That our countrymen have at any time erred much in this point, cannot, we think, truly be alleged against them. Neither shall we say, with some passionate admirers of Germany, that to the Germans in particular they have been unjust. It is true the literature and character of that country, which, within the last half century, have been more worthy perhaps than any other of our study and regard, are still very generally unknown to us, or, what is worse, misknown; but for this there are not wanting less offensive reasons. That the false and tawdry ware, which was in all hands, should reach us before the chaste and truly excellent, which it required some excellence to recognise; that Kotzebue's insanity should have spread faster, by some fifty years, than Lessing's wisdom; that Kant's Philosophy should stand in the background as a dreary and abortive dream, and Gall's Craniology be held out to us from every booth as a reality;—all this lay in the nature of the case. That many readers should draw conclusions from imperfect premises, and by the imports judge too hastily of the stock imported from, was likewise natural. No unfair bias, no unwise indisposition, that we are aware of, has ever been at work in the matter; perhaps, at worst, a degree of indolence, a blamable incuriosity to all products of foreign genius: for what more do we know of recent Spanish or Italian literature, than of German; of Grossi and Manzoni, of Campomanes or Jovellanos, than of Tieck and Richter? Wherever German art, in those forms of it which need no interpreter, has addressed us immediately, our recognition of it has been prompt and hearty; from Dürer to Mengs, from Händel to Weber and Beethoven, we have welcomed the painters and musicians of Germany, not only to our praise, but to our affections and beneficence. Nor, if in their literature we have been more backward, is the literature itself without blame. Two centuries ago, translations from the German were comparatively frequent in England: Luther's *Table-Talk* is still a venerable classic in our language; nay, Jacob Böhme has found a place among us, and this not as a dead letter, but as a living apostle to a still living sect of our religionists. In the next century, indeed, translation ceased; but then it was, in a

great measure, because there was little worth translating. The horrors of the Thirty-Years War, followed by the conquests and conflagrations of Louis the Fourteenth, had desolated the country; French influence, extending from the courts of princes to the closets of the learned, lay like a baleful incubus over the far nobler mind of Germany; and all true nationality vanished from its literature, or was heard only in faint tones, which lived in the hearts of the people, but could not reach with any effect to the ears of foreigners.[2] And now that the genius of the country has awakened in its old strength, our attention to it has certainly awakened also; and if we yet know little or nothing of the Germans, it is not because we wilfully

[2] Not that the Germans were idle; or altogether engaged, as we too loosely suppose, in the work of commentary and lexicography. On the contrary, they rhymed and romanced with due vigour as to quantity; only the quality was bad. Two facts on this head may deserve mention: In the year 1749 there were found in the library of one virtuoso no fewer than 300 volumes of devotional poetry, containing, says Horn, 'a treasure of 33,712 German hymns;' and, much about the same period, one of Gottsched's scholars had amassed as many as 1500 German novels, all of the seventeenth century. The hymns we understand to be much better than the novels, or rather, perhaps, the novels to be much worse than the hymns. Neither was critical study neglected, nor indeed honest endeavour on all hands to attain improvement: witness the strange books from time to time put forth, and the still stranger institutions established for this purpose. Among the former we have the 'Poetical Funnel' (*Poetische Trichter*), manufactured at Nürnberg in 1650, and professing, within six hours, to pour-in the whole essence of this difficult art into the most unfurnished head. Nürnberg also was the chief seat of the famous *Meistersänger* and their *Sängerzünfte*, or Singer-guilds, in which poetry was taught and practised like any other handicraft, and this by sober and well-meaning men, chiefly artisans, who could not understand why labour, which manufactured so many things, should not also manufacture another. Of these tuneful guild-brethren, Hans Sachs, by trade a shoemaker, is greatly the most noted and most notable. His father was a tailor; he himself learned the mystery of song under one Nunnebeck, a weaver. He was an adherent of his great contemporary Luther, who has even deigned to acknowledge his services in the cause of the Reformation. How diligent a labourer Sachs must have been, will appear from the fact, that, in his 74th year (1568), on examining his stock for publication, he found that he had written 6048 poetical pieces, among which were 208 tragedies and comedies; and this besides having all along kept house, like an honest Nürnberg burgher, by assiduous and sufficient shoe-making! Hans is not without genius, and a shrewd irony; and, above all, the most gay, childlike, yet devout and solid character. A man neither to be despised nor patronised; but left standing on his own basis, as a singular product, and a still legible symbol and clear mirror of the time and country where he lived. His best piece known to us, and many are well worth perusing, is the *Fastnachtsspiel* (Shrovetide Farce) of the *Narrenschneiden*, where the Doctor cures a bloated and lethargic patient by cutting-out half-a-dozen *Fools* from his interior!

do them wrong, but, in good part, because they are somewhat difficult to know.

In fact, prepossessions of all sorts naturally enough find their place here. A country which has no national literature, or a literature too insignificant to force its way abroad, must always be, to its neighbours, at least in every important spiritual respect, an unknown and misestimated country. Its towns may figure on our maps; its revenues, population, manufactures, political connexions, may be recorded in statistical books: but the character of the people has no symbol and no voice; we cannot know them by speech and discourse, but only by mere sight and outward observation of their manners and procedure. Now, if both sight and speech, if both travellers and native literature, are found but ineffectual in this respect, how incalculably more so the former alone! To seize a character, even that of one man, in its life and secret mechanism, requires a philosopher; to delineate it with truth and impressiveness, is work for a poet. How shall one or two sleek clerical tutors, with here and there a tedium-stricken 'squire, or speculative half-pay captain, give us views on such a subject? How shall a man, to whom all characters of individual men are like sealed books, of which he sees only the title and the covers, decipher, from his four-wheeled vehicle, and depict to us, the character of a nation? He courageously depicts his own optical delusions; notes this to be incomprehensible, that other to be insignificant; much to be good, much to be bad, and most of all indifferent; and so, with a few flowing strokes, completes a picture which, though it may not even resemble any possible object, his countrymen are to take for a national portrait. Nor is the fraud so readily detected: for the character of a people has such complexity of aspect, that even the honest observer knows not always, not perhaps after long inspection, what to determine regarding it. From his, only accidental, point of view, the figure stands before him like the tracings on veined marble,—a mass of mere random lines, and tints, and entangled strokes, out of which a lively fancy may shape almost *any* image. But the image he brings along with him is always the readiest; this is tried, it answers as well as another; and a second voucher now testifies its correctness. Thus each, in confident tones, though it may be with a secret misgiving, repeats his precursor; the hundred times repeated comes in the

end to be believed; the foreign nation is now once for all understood, decided on, and registered accordingly; and dunce the thousandth writes of it like dunce the first.

With the aid of literary and intellectual intercourse, much of this falsehood may, no doubt, be corrected: yet even here, sound judgment is far from easy; and most national characters are still, as Hume long ago complained, the product rather of popular prejudice than of philosophic insight. That the Germans, in particular, have by no means escaped such misrepresentation, nay perhaps have had more than the common share of it, cannot, in their circumstances, surprise us. From the time of Opitz and Flemming, to those of Klopstock and Lessing,—that is, from the early part of the seventeenth to the middle of the eighteenth century,—they had scarcely any literature known abroad, or deserving to be known: their political condition, during this same period, was oppressive and everyway unfortunate externally; and at home, the nation, split into so many factions and petty states, had lost all feeling of itself as of a nation; and its energies in arts as in arms were manifested only in detail, too often in collision, and always under foreign influence. The French, at once their plunderers and their scoffers, described them to the rest of Europe as a semi-barbarous people; which comfortable fact the rest of Europe was willing enough to take on their word. During the greater part of the last century, the Germans, in our intellectual survey of the world, were quietly omitted; a vague contemptuous ignorance prevailed respecting them; it was a Cimmerian land, where, if a few sparks did glimmer, it was but so as to testify their own existence, too feebly to enlighten *us*.[3] The Germans passed for apprentices in all provinces of art; and many foreign craftsmen scarcely allowed them so much.

[3] So late as the year 1811, we find, from *Pinkerton's Geography*, the sole representative of German literature to be Gottshed (with his name wrong spelt), 'who first introduced a more refined style.'—Gottsched has been dead the greater part of a century; and, for the last fifty years, ranks among the Germans somewhat as Prynne or Alexander Ross does among ourselves. A man of a cold, rigid, perseverant character, who mistook himself for a poet and the perfection of critics, and had skill to pass current during the greater part of his literary life for such. On the strength of his *Boileau* and *Batteux*, he long reigned supreme; but it was like Night, in rayless majesty, and over a slumbering people. They awoke before his death, and hurled him, perhaps too indignantly, into his native Abyss.

Madame de Staël's book has done away with this: all Europe is now aware that the Germans are something; something independent and apart from others; nay something deep, imposing and, if not admirable, wonderful. What that something is, indeed, is still undecided; for this gifted lady's *Allemagne*, in doing much to excite curiosity, has still done little to satisfy or even direct it. We can no longer make ignorance a boast, but we are yet far from having acquired right knowledge; and cavillers, excluded from contemptuous negation, have found a resource in almost as contemptuous assertion. Translators are the same faithless and stolid race that they have ever been: the particle of gold they bring us over is hidden from all but the most patient eye, among shiploads of yellow sand and sulphur. Gentle Dulness too, in this as in all other things, still loves her joke. The Germans, though much more attended to, are perhaps not less mistaken than before.

Doubtless, however, there is in this increased attention a progress towards the truth; which it is only investigation and discussion that can help us to find. The study of German literature has already taken such firm root among us, and is spreading so visibly, that by and by, as we believe, the true character of it must and will become known. A result, which is to bring us into closer and friendlier union with forty millions of civilised men, cannot surely be other than desirable. If they have precious truth to impart, we shall receive it as the highest of all gifts; if error, we shall not only reject it, but explain it and trace out its origin, and so help our brethren also to reject it. In either point of view, and for all profitable purposes of national intercourse, correct knowledge is the first and indispensable preliminary.

Meanwhile, errors of all sorts prevail on this subject: even among men of sense and liberality we have found so much hallucination, so many groundless or half-grounded objections to German literature, that the tone in which a multitude of other men speak of it cannot appear extraordinary. To much of this, even a slight knowledge of the Germans would furnish a sufficient answer. We have thought it might be useful were the chief of these objections marshalled in distinct order, and examined with what degree of light and fairness is at our disposal. In attempting this, we are vain enough, for reasons already stated, to fancy ourselves discharging what is in some

sort a national duty. It is unworthy of one great people to think falsely of another; it is unjust, and therefore unworthy. Of the injury it does to ourselves we do not speak, for that is an inferior consideration: yet surely if the grand principle of free intercourse is so profitable in material commerce, much more must it be in the commerce of the mind, the products of which are thereby not so much transported out of one country into another, as multiplied over all, for the benefit of all, and without loss to any. If that man is a benefactor to the world who causes two ears of corn to grow where only one grew before, much more is he a benefactor who causes two truths to grow up together in harmony and mutual confirmation, where before only one stood solitary, and, on that side at least, intolerant and hostile.

In dealing with the host of objections which front us on this subject, we think it may be convenient to range them under two principal heads. The first, as respects chiefly unsoundness or imperfection of sentiment; an error which may in general be denominated *Bad Taste*. The second, as respects chiefly a wrong condition of intellect; an error which may be designated by the general title of *Mysticism*. Both of these, no doubt, are partly connected; and each, in some degree, springs from and returns into the other: yet, for present purposes, the divisions may be precise enough.

First, then, of the first: It is objected that the Germans have a radically bad taste. This is a deep-rooted objection, which assumes many forms, and extends through many ramifications. Among men of less acquaintance with the subject of German taste, or of taste in general, the spirit of the accusation seems to be somewhat as follows: That the Germans, with much natural susceptibility, are still in a rather coarse and uncultivated state of mind; displaying, with the energy and other virtues of a rude people, many of their vices also; in particular, a certain wild and headlong temper, which seizes on all things too hastily and impetuously; weeps, storms, loves, hates, too fiercely and vociferously; delighting in coarse excitements, such as flaring contrasts, vulgar horrors, and all sorts of showy exaggeration. Their literature, in particular, is thought to dwell with peculiar complacency among wizards and ruined towers, with mailed knights, secret tribunals, monks, spectres and banditti: on the other hand, there is an undue love of

moonlight, and mossy fountains, and the moral sublime: then we have descriptions of things which should not be described; a general want of tact; nay often a hollowness and want of sense. In short, the German Muse comports herself, it is said, like a passionate and rather fascinating, but tumultuous, uninstructed and but half-civilised Muse. A *belle sauvage* at best, we can only love her with a sort of supercilious tolerance; often she tears a passion to rags; and, in her tumid vehemence, struts without meaning, and to the offence of all literary decorum.

Now, in all this there is not wanting a certain degree of truth. If any man will insist on taking Heinse's *Ardinghello* and Miller's *Siegwart*, and the works of Veit Weber the Younger, and, above all, the everlasting Kotzebue, as his specimens of German literature, he may establish many things. Black Forests, and the glories of Lubberland; sensuality and horror, the spectre nun, and the charmed moonshine, shall not be wanting. Boisterous outlaws also, with huge whiskers and the most cat-o'-mountain aspect; tear-stained sentimentalists, the grimmest manhaters, ghosts and the like suspicious characters, will be found in abundance. We are little read in this bowl-and-dagger department; but we do understand it to have been at one time rather diligently cultivated; though at present it seems to be mostly relinquished as unproductive. Other forms of Unreason have taken its place; which in their turn must yield to still other forms; for it is the nature of this goddess to descend in frequent *avatars* among men. Perhaps not less than five hundred volumes of such stuff could still be collected from the bookstalls of Germany. By which truly we may learn that there is in that country a class of unwise men and unwise women; that many readers there labour under a degree of ignorance and mental vacancy, and read not actively but passively, not to learn but to be amused. Is this fact so very new to us? Or what should we think of a German critic that selected his specimens of British literature from the *Castle Spectre*, Mr. Lewis's *Monk*, or the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, and *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus?* Or would he judge rightly of our dramatic taste, if he took his extracts from Mr. Egan's *Tom and Jerry;* and told his readers, as he might truly do, that *no* play had ever enjoyed such currency on the English stage as this most classic performance? We think,

not. In like manner, till some author of acknowledged merit shall so write among the Germans, and be approved of by critics of acknowledged merit among them, or at least secure for himself some permanency of favour among the million, we can prove nothing by such instances. That there is so perverse an author, or so blind a critic, in the whole compass of German literature, we have no hesitation in denying.

But farther: among men of deeper views, and with regard to works of really standard character, we find, though not the same, a similar objection repeated. Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, it is said, and *Faust*, are full of bad taste also. With respect to the taste in which they are written, we shall have occasion to say somewhat hereafter: meanwhile we may be permitted to remark that the objection would have more force, did it seem to originate from a more mature consideration of the subject. We have heard few English criticisms of such works, in which the first condition of an approach to accuracy was complied with;—a transposition of the critic into the author's point of vision, a survey of the author's means and objects as they lay before himself, and a just trial of these by rules of universal application. *Faust*, for instance, passes with many of us for a mere tale of sorcery and art-magic. It would scarcely be more unwise to consider *Hamlet* as depending for its main interest on the ghost that walks in it, than to regard *Faust* as a production of that sort. For the present, therefore, this objection may be set aside; or at least may be considered not as an assertion, but an inquiry, the answer to which may turn out rather that the German taste is different from ours, than that it is worse. Nay, with regard even to difference, we should scarcely reckon it to be of great moment. Two nations that agree in estimating Shakspeare as the highest of all poets, can differ in no essential principle, if they understood one another, that relates to poetry.

Nevertheless, this opinion of our opponents has attained a certain degree of consistency with itself; one thing is thought to throw light on another; nay, a quiet little theory has been propounded to explain the whole phenomenon. The cause of this bad taste, we are assured, lies in the condition of the German authors. These, it seems, are generally very poor; the ceremonial law of the country excludes them from all society with

the great; they cannot acquire the polish of drawing-rooms, but must live in mean houses, and therefore write and think in a mean style.

Apart from the truth of these assumptions, and in respect of the theory itself, we confess there is something in the face of it that afflicts us. Is it, then, so certain that taste and riches are indissolubly connected? That truth of feeling must ever be preceded by weight of purse, and the eyes be dim for universal and eternal Beauty, till they have long rested on gilt walls and costly furniture? To the great body of mankind this were heavy news; for, of the thousand, scarcely one is rich, or connected with the rich; nine hundred and ninety-nine have always been poor, and must always be so. We take the liberty of questioning the whole postulate. We think that, for acquiring true poetic taste, riches, or association with the rich, are distinctly among the minor requisites; that, in fact, they have little or no concern with the matter. This we shall now endeavour to make probable.

Taste, if it mean anything but a paltry connoisseurship, must mean a general susceptibility to truth and nobleness; a sense to discern, and a heart to love and reverence, all beauty, order, goodness, wheresoever or in whatsoever forms and accompaniments they are to be seen. This surely implies, as its chief condition, not any given external rank or situation, but a finely-gifted mind, purified into harmony with itself, into keenness and justness of vision; above all, kindled into love and generous admiration. Is culture of this sort found exclusively among the higher ranks? We believe it proceeds less from without than within, in every rank. The charms of Nature, the majesty of Man, the infinite loveliness of Truth and Virtue, are not hidden from the eye of the poor; but from the eye of the vain, the corrupted and self-seeking, be he poor or rich. In old ages, the humble Minstrel, a mendicant, and lord of nothing but his harp and his own free soul, had intimations of those glories, while to the proud Baron in his barbaric halls they were unknown. Nor is there still any aristocratic monopoly of judgment more than of genius: for as to that *Science of Negation*, which is taught peculiarly by men of professed elegance, we confess we hold it rather cheap. It is a necessary, but decidedly a subordinate accomplishment; nay, if it be rated as the highest, it becomes a ruinous vice. This is an

old truth; yet ever needing new application and enforcement. Let us know what to love, and we shall know also what to reject; what to affirm, and we shall know also what to deny: but it is dangerous to *begin* with denial, and fatal to end with it. To deny is easy; nothing is sooner learnt or more generally practised: as matters go, we need no man of polish to teach it; but rather, if possible, a hundred men of wisdom to show us its limits, and teach us its reverse.

Such is our hypothesis of the case: how stands it with the facts? Are the fineness and truth of sense manifested by the artist found, in most instances, to be proportionate to his wealth and elevation of acquaintance? Are they found to have any perceptible relation either with the one or the other? We imagine, not. Whose taste in painting, for instance, is truer and finer than Claude Lorraine's? And was not he a poor colour-grinder; outwardly the meanest of menials? Where, again, we might ask, lay Shakspeare's rent-roll; and what generous peer took him by the hand and unfolded to him the 'open secret' of the Universe; teaching him that this was beautiful, and that not so? Was he not a peasant by birth, and by fortune something lower; and was it not thought much, even in the height of his reputation, that Southampton allowed him equal patronage with the zanies, jugglers and bearwards of the time? Yet compare his taste, even as it respects the negative side of things; for, in regard to the positive and far higher side, it admits no comparison with any other mortal's, —compare it, for instance, with the taste of Beaumont and Fletcher, his contemporaries, men of rank and education, and of fine genius like himself. Tried even by the nice, fastidious and in great part false and artificial delicacy of modern times, how stands it with the two parties; with the gay triumphant men of fashion, and the poor vagrant linkboy? Does the latter sin against, we shall not say taste, but etiquette, as the former do? For one line, for one word, which some Chesterfield might wish blotted from the first, are there not in the others whole pages and scenes which, with palpitating heart, he would hurry into deepest night? This too, observe, respects not their genius, but their culture; not their appropriation of beauties, but their rejection of deformities, by supposition the grand and peculiar result of high breeding! Surely, in such instances, even that humble supposition is ill borne out.

The truth of the matter seems to be, that with the culture of a genuine poet, thinker or other artist, the influence of rank has no exclusive or even special concern. For men of action, for senators, public speakers, political writers, the case may be different; but of such we speak not at present. Neither do we speak of imitators, and the crowd of mediocre men, to whom fashionable life sometimes gives an external inoffensiveness, often compensated by a frigid malignity of character. We speak of men who, from amid the perplexed and conflicting elements of their everyday existence, are to form themselves into harmony and wisdom, and show forth the same wisdom to others that exist along with them. To such a man, high life, as it is called, will be a province of human life, but nothing more. He will study to deal with it as he deals with all forms of mortal being; to do it justice, and to draw instruction from it: but his light will come from a loftier region, or he wanders forever in darkness; dwindles into a man of *vers de société*, or attains at best to be a Walpole or a Caylus. Still less can we think that he is to be viewed as a hireling; that his excellence will be regulated by his pay. 'Sufficiently provided for from within, he has need of little from without:' food and raiment, and an unviolated home, will be given him in the rudest land; and with these, while the kind earth is round him, and the everlasting heaven is over him, the world has little more that it can give. Is he poor? So also were Homer and Socrates; so was Samuel Johnson; so was John Milton. Shall we reproach him with his poverty, and infer that, because he is poor, he must likewise be worthless? God forbid that the time should ever come when he too shall esteem riches the synonym of good! The spirit of Mammon has a wide empire; but it cannot, and must not, be worshipped in the Holy of Holies. Nay, does not the heart of every genuine disciple of literature, however mean his sphere, instinctively deny this principle, as applicable either to himself or another? Is it not rather true, as D'Alembert has said, that for every man of letters, who deserves that name, the motto and the watchword will be FREEDOM, TRUTH, and even this same POVERTY; that if he fear the last, the two first can never be made sure to him?

We have stated these things, to bring the question somewhat nearer its real basis; not for the sake of the Germans,

who nowise need the admission of them. The German authors are not poor; neither are they excluded from association with the wealthy and well-born. On the contrary, we scruple not to say, that in both these respects they are considerably better situated than our own. Their booksellers, it is true, cannot pay as ours do; yet, there as here, a man lives by his writings; and, to compare *Jördens* with *Johnson* and *D'Israeli*, somewhat better there than here. No case like our own noble Otway's has met us in their biographies; Boyces and Chattertons are much rarer in German than in English history. But farther, and what is far more important: From the number of universities, libraries, collections of art, museums, and other literary or scientific institutions of a public or private nature, we question whether the chance which a meritorious man of letters has before him, of obtaining some permanent appointment, some independent civic existence, is not a hundred to one in favour of the German, compared with the Englishman. This is a weighty item, and indeed the weightiest of all; for it will be granted, that, for the votary of literature, the relation of entire dependence on the merchants of literature is, at best, and however liberal the terms, a highly questionable one. It tempts him daily and hourly to sink from an artist into a manufacturer; nay, so precarious, fluctuating and everyway unsatisfactory must his civic and economic concerns become, that too many of his class cannot even attain the praise of common honesty as manufacturers. There is, no doubt, a spirit of martyrdom, as we have asserted, which can sustain this too: but few indeed have the spirit of martyrs; and that state of matters is the safest which requires it least. The German authors, moreover, to their credit be it spoken, seem to set less store by wealth than many of ours. There have been prudent, quiet men among them, who actually appeared not to want more wealth; whom wealth could not tempt, either to this hand or that, from their preappointed aims. Neither must we think so hardly of the German nobility as to believe them insensible to genius, or of opinion that a patent from the Lion King is so superior to 'a patent direct from Almighty God.' A fair proportion of the German authors are themselves men of rank: we mention only, as of our own time, and notable in other respects, the two Stolbergs and Novalis. Let us not be unjust to this class of persons. It is a poor error to figure

them as wrapt-up in ceremonial stateliness, avoiding the most gifted man of a lower station; and, for their own supercilious triviality, themselves avoided by all truly gifted men. On the whole, we should change our notion of the German nobleman: that ancient, thirsty, thickheaded, sixteen-quartered Baron, who still hovers in our minds, never did exist in such perfection, and is now as extinct as our own Squire Western. His descendant is a man of other culture, other aims and other habits. We question whether there is an aristocracy in Europe, which, taken as a whole, both in a public and private capacity, more honours art and literature, and does more both in public and private to encourage them. Excluded from society! What, we would ask, was Wieland's, Schiller's, Herder's, Johannes Müller's society? Has not Goethe, by birth a Frankfort burgher, been, since his twenty-sixth year, the companion, not of nobles but of princes, and for half his life a minister of state? And is not this man, unrivalled in so many far deeper qualities, known also and felt to be unrivalled in nobleness of breeding and bearing; fit not to learn of princes in this respect, but by the example of his daily life to teach them?

We hear much of the munificent spirit displayed among the better classes in England; their high estimation of the arts, and generous patronage of the artist. We rejoice to hear it; we hope it is true, and will become truer and truer. We hope that a great change has taken place among these classes, since the time when Bishop Burnet could write of them, 'They are 'for the most part the *worst* instructed, and the *least* knowing, 'of any of their rank I ever went among!' Nevertheless, let us arrogate to ourselves no exclusive praise in this particular. Other nations can appreciate the arts, and cherish their cultivators, as well as we. Nay, while learning from us in many other matters, we suspect the Germans might even teach us somewhat in regard to this. At all events, the pity, which certain of our authors express for the civil condition of their brethren in that country is, from such a quarter, a superfluous feeling. Nowhere, let us rest assured, is genius more devoutly honoured than there, by all ranks of men, from peasants and burghers up to legislators and kings. It was but last year that the Diet of the Empire passed an Act in favour of one individual poet: the Final Edition of Goethe's Works was guaranteed to be protected against commercial injury in every State

of Germany; and special assurances to that effect were sent him, in the kindest terms, from all the Authorities there assembled, some of them the highest in his country or in Europe. Nay, even while we write, are not the newspapers recording a visit from the Sovereign of Bavaria in person to the same venerable man?—a mere ceremony perhaps, but one which almost recalls to us the era of the antique Sages and the Grecian Kings.

This hypothesis, therefore, it would seem, is not supported by facts, and so returns to its original elements. The causes it alleges are impossible: but, what is still more fatal, the effect it proposes to account for has, in reality, no existence. We venture to deny that the Germans are defective in taste; even as a nation, as a public, taking one thing with another, we imagine they may stand comparison with any of their neighbours; as writers, as critics, they may decidedly court it. True, there is a mass of dulness, awkwardness and false susceptibility in the lower regions of their literature: but is not bad taste endemical in such regions of every literature under the sun? Pure Stupidity, indeed, is of a quiet nature, and content to be merely stupid. But seldom do we find it pure; seldom unadulterated with some tincture of ambition, which drives it into new and strange metamorphoses. Here it has assumed a contemptuous trenchant air, intended to represent superior tact, and a sort of all-wisdom; there a truculent atrabilious scowl, which is to stand for passionate strength: now we have an outpouring of tumid fervour; now a fruitless, asthmatic hunting after wit and humour. Grave or gay, enthusiastic or derisive, admiring or despising, the dull man would be something which he is not and cannot be. Shall we confess that, of these two common extremes, we reckon the German error considerably the more harmless, and, in our day, by far the more curable? Of unwise admiration much may be hoped, for much good is really in it: but unwise contempt is itself a negation; nothing comes of it, for it *is* nothing.

To judge of a national taste, however, we must raise our view from its transitory modes to its perennial models; from the mass of vulgar writers, who blaze out and are extinguished with the popular delusion which they flatter, to those few who are admitted to shine with a pure and lasting lustre; to whom, by common consent, the eyes of the people are turned, as to its

loadstars and celestial luminaries. Among German writers of this stamp, we would ask any candid reader of them, let him be of what country or creed he might, whether bad taste struck him as a prevailing characteristic. Was Wieland's taste uncultivated? Taste, we should say, and taste of the very species which a disciple of the Negative School would call the highest, formed the great object of his life; the perfection he unwearyingly endeavoured after, and, more than any other perfection, has attained. The most fastidious Frenchman might read him, with admiration of his merely French qualities. And is not Klopstock, with his clear enthusiasm, his azure purity, and heavenly if still somewhat cold and lunar light, a man of taste? His *Messias* reminds us oftener of no other poets than of Virgil and Racine. But it is to Lessing that an Englishman would turn with readiest affection. We cannot but wonder that more of this man is not known among us; or that the knowledge of him has not done more to remove such misconceptions. Among all the writers of the eighteenth century, we will not except even Diderot and David Hume, there is not one of a more compact and rigid intellectual structure; who more distinctly knows what he is aiming at, or with more gracefulness, vigour and precision sets it forth to his readers. He thinks with the clearness and piercing sharpness of the most expert logician; but a genial fire pervades him, a wit, a heartiness, a general richness and fineness of nature, to which most logicians are strangers. He is a sceptic in many things, but the noblest of sceptics; a mild, manly, half-careless enthusiasm struggles through his indignant unbelief: he stands before us like a toilworn but unwearied and heroic champion, earning not the conquest but the battle; as indeed himself admits to us, that 'it is not the finding of truth, but the honest search for it, that profits.' We confess, we should be entirely at a loss for the literary creed of that man who reckoned Lessing other than a thoroughly cultivated writer; nay, entitled to rank, in this particular, with the most distinguished writers of any existing nation. As a poet, as a critic, philosopher, or controversialist, his style will be found precisely such as we of England are accustomed to admire most; brief, nervous, vivid; yet quiet, without glitter or antithesis; idiomatic, pure without purism; transparent, yet full of character and reflex hues of meaning. 'Every sentence,' says Horn, and justly, 'is like a phalanx;' not a word wrong-

placed, not a word that could be spared ; and it forms itself so calmly and lightly, and stands in its completeness, so gay, yet so impregnable ! As a poet he contemptuously denied himself all merit ; but his readers have not taken him at his word : here too a similar felicity of style attends him ; his plays, his *Minna von Barnhelm*, his *Emilie Galotti*, his *Nathan der Weise*, have a genuine and graceful poetic life ; yet no works known to us in any language are purer from exaggeration, or any appearance of falsehood. They are pictures, we might say, painted not in colours, but in crayons ; yet a strange attraction lies in them ; for the figures are grouped into the finest attitudes, and true and spirit-speaking in every line. It is with his style chiefly that we have to do here ; yet we must add, that the matter of his works is not less meritorious. His Criticism and philosophic or religious Scepticism were of a higher mood than had yet been heard in Europe, still more in Germany : his *Dramaturgie* first exploded the pretensions of the French theatre, and, with irresistible conviction, made Shakspeare known to his countrymen ; preparing the way for a brighter era in their literature, the chief men of which still thankfully look back to Lessing as their patriarch. His *Laocoon*, with its deep glances into the philosophy of Art, his *Dialogues of Freemasons*, a work of far higher import than its title indicates, may yet teach many things to most of us, which we know not, and ought to know.

With Lessing and Klopstock might be joined, in this respect, nearly every one, we do not say of their distinguished, but even of their tolerated contemporaries. The two Jacobis, known more or less in all countries, are little known here, if they are accused of wanting literary taste. These are men, whether as thinkers or poets, to be regarded and admired for their mild and lofty wisdom, the devoutness, the benignity and calm grandeur of their philosophical views. In such, it were strange if among so many high merits, this lower one of a just and elegant style, which is indeed their natural and even necessary product, had been wanting. We recommend the elder Jacobi no less for his clearness than for his depth ; of the younger, it may be enough in this point of view to say, that the chief praisers of his earlier poetry were the French. Neither are Hamann and Mendelsohn, who could meditate deep thoughts, defective in the power of uttering them with propriety. The *Phædon* of the latter, in its chaste precision and simplicity of

style, may almost remind us of Xenophon: Socrates, to our mind, has spoken in no modern language so like Socrates, as here, by the lips of this wise and cultivated Jew.[4]

Among the poets and more popular writers of the time, the case is the same: Utz, Gellert, Cramer, Ramler, Kleist, Hagedorn, Rabener, Gleim, and a multitude of lesser men, whatever excellences they might want, certainly are not chargeable with bad taste. Nay, perhaps of all writers they are the least chargeable with it: a certain clear, light, unaffected elegance, of a higher nature than French elegance, it might be, yet to the exclusion of all very deep or genial qualities, was the excellence they strove after, and, for the most part, in a fair measure attained. They resemble English writers of the same, or perhaps an earlier period, more than any other foreigners: apart from Pope, whose influence is visible enough, Beattie, Logan, Wilkie, Glover, unknown perhaps to any of them, might otherwise have almost seemed their models. Goldsmith also would rank among them; perhaps in regard to true poetic genius, at their head, for none of them has left us a *Vicar of Wakefield;* though, in regard to judgment, knowledge, general talent, his place would scarcely be so high.

The same thing holds in general, and with fewer drawbacks, of the somewhat later and more energetic race, denominated the *Göttingen School;* in contradistinction from the *Saxon*, to which Rabener, Cramer and Gellert directly belonged, and most of those others indirectly. Hölty, Bürger, the two Stolbergs, are

[4] The history of Mendelsohn is interesting in itself, and full of encouragement to all lovers of self-improvement. At thirteen he was a wandering Jewish beggar, without health, without home, almost without a language, —for the jargon of broken Hebrew and provincial German which he spoke could scarcely be called one. At middle age he could write this *Phædon;* was a man of wealth and breeding, and ranked among the teachers of his age. Like Pope, he abode by his original creed, though often solicited to change it: indeed, the grand problem of his life was to better the inward and outward condition of his own ill-fated people; for whom he actually accomplished much benefit. He was a mild, shrewd and worthy man; and might well love *Phædon* and Socrates, for his own character was Socratic. He was a friend of Lessing's: indeed, a pupil; for Lessing, having accidentally met him at chess, recognised the spirit that lay struggling under such incumbrances, and generously undertook to help him. By teaching the poor Jew a little Greek, he disenchanted him from the Talmud and the Rabbins. The two were afterwards co-labourers in Nicolai's *Deutsche Bibliothek*, the first German *Review* of any character; which, however, in the hands of Nicolai himself, it subsequently lost. Mendelsohn's Works have mostly been translated into French.

men whom Bossu might measure with his scales and compasses as strictly as he pleased. Of Herder, Schiller, Goethe, we speak not here: they are men of another stature and form of movement, whom Bossu's scale and compasses could not measure without difficulty, or rather not at all. To say that such men wrote with taste of this sort, were saying little; for this forms not the apex, but the basis, in their conception of style; a quality not to be paraded as an excellence, but to be understood as indispensable, as there by necessity and like a thing of course.

In truth, for it must be spoken out, our opponents are widely astray in this matter; so widely that their views of it are not only dim and perplexed, but altogether imaginary and delusive. It is proposed to school the Germans in the Alphabet of taste; and the Germans are already busied with their Accidence! Far from being behind other nations in the practice or science of Criticism, it is a fact, for which we fearlessly refer to all competent judges, that they are distinctly and even considerably in advance. We state what is already known to a great part of Europe to be true. Criticism has assumed a new form in Germany; it proceeds on other principles, and proposes to itself a higher aim. The grand question is not now a question concerning the qualities of diction, the coherence of metaphors, the fitness of sentiments, the general logical truth, in a work of art, as it was some half-century ago among most critics; neither is it a question mainly of a psychological sort, to be answered by discovering and delineating the peculiar nature of the poet from his poetry, as is usual with the best of our own critics at present: but it is, not indeed exclusively, but inclusively of those two other questions, properly and ultimately a question on the essence and peculiar life of the poetry itself. The first of these questions, as we see it answered, for instance, in the criticisms of Johnson and Kames, relates, strictly speaking, to the *garment* of poetry; the second, indeed, to its *body* and material existence, a much higher point; but only the last to its *soul* and spiritual existence, by which alone can the body, in its movements and phases, be *informed* with significance and rational life. The problem is not now to determine by what mechanism Addison composed sentences and struck-out similitudes; but by what far finer and more mysterious mechanism Shakspeare organised his dramas, and gave life and individuality to his

Ariel and his Hamlet. Wherein lies that life; how have they attained that shape and individuality? Whence comes that empyrean fire, which irradiates their whole being, and pierces, at least in starry gleams, like a diviner thing, into all hearts? Are these dramas of his not veri-similar only, but true; nay, truer than reality itself, since the essence of unmixed reality is bodied forth in them under more expressive symbols? What is this unity of theirs; and can our deeper inspection discern it to be indivisible, and existing by necessity, because each work springs, as it were, from the general elements of all Thought, and grows up therefrom, into form and expansion by its own growth? Not only who was the poet, and how did he compose; but what and how was the poem, and why was it a poem and not rhymed eloquence, creation and not figured passion? These are the questions for the critic. Criticism stands like an interpreter between the inspired and the uninspired; between the prophet and those who hear the melody of his words, and catch some glimpse of their material meaning, but understand not their deeper import. She pretends to open for us this deeper import; to clear our sense that it may discern the pure brightness of this eternal Beauty, and recognise it as heavenly, under all forms where it looks forth, and reject, as of the earth earthy, all forms, be their material splendour what it may, where no gleaming of that other shines through.

This is the task of Criticism, as the Germans understand it. And how do they accomplish this task? By a vague declamation clothed in gorgeous mystic phraseology? By vehement tumultuous anthems to the poet and his poetry; by epithets and laudatory similitudes drawn from Tartarus and Elysium, and all intermediate terrors and glories; whereby, in truth, it is rendered clear both that the poet is an extremely great poet, and also that the critic's allotment of understanding, overflowed by these Pythian raptures, has unhappily melted into deliquium? Nowise in this manner do the Germans proceed: but by rigorous scientific inquiry; by appeal to principles which, whether correct or not, have been deduced patiently, and by long investigation, from the highest and calmest regions of Philosophy. For this finer portion of their Criticism is now also embodied in systems; and standing, so far as these reach, coherent, distinct and methodical, no less than, on their much shallower foundation, the systems of Boileau and Blair. That this new

Criticism is a complete, much more a certain science, we are far from meaning to affirm : the *æsthetic* theories of Kant, Herder, Schiller, Goethe, Richter, vary in external aspect, according to the varied habits of the individual ; and can at best only be regarded as approximations to the truth, or modifications of it ; each critic representing it, as it harmonises more or less perfectly with the other intellectual persuasions of his own mind, and of different classes of minds that resemble his. Nor can we here undertake to inquire what degree of such approximation to the truth there is in each or all of these writers ; or in Tieck and the two Schlegels, who, especially the latter, have laboured so meritoriously in reconciling these various opinions ; and so successfully in impressing and diffusing the best spirit of them, first in their own country, and now also in several others. Thus much, however, we will say : That we reckon the mere circumstance of such a science being in existence, a ground of the highest consideration, and worthy the best attention of all inquiring men. For we should err widely if we thought that this new tendency of critical science pertains to Germany alone. It is a European tendency, and springs from the general condition of intellect in Europe. We ourselves have all, for the last thirty years, more or less distinctly felt the necessity of such a science : witness the neglect into which our Blairs and Bossus have silently fallen ; our increased and increasing admiration, not only of Shakspeare, but of all his contemporaries, and of all who breathe any portion of his spirit ; our controversy whether Pope was a poet ; and so much vague effort on the part of our best critics everywhere to express some still unexpressed idea concerning the nature of true poetry ; as if they felt in their hearts that a pure glory, nay a divineness, belonged to it, for which they had as yet no name and no intellectual form But in Italy too, in France itself, the same thing is visible. Their grand controversy, so hotly urged, between the *Classicists* and *Romanticists*, in which the Schlegels are assumed, much too loosely, on all hands, as the patrons and generalissimos of the latter, shows us sufficiently what spirit is at work in that long-stagnant literature. Doubtless this turbid fermentation of the elements will at length settle into clearness, both there and here, as in Germany it has already in a great measure done ; and perhaps a more serene and genial poetic day is everywhere to be expected with some confidence. How much the example

of the Germans may have to teach us in this particular, needs no farther exposition.

The authors and first promulgators of this new critical doctrine were at one time contemptuously named the *New School;* nor was it till after a war of all the few good heads in the nation with all the many bad ones had ended as such wars must ever do,[5] that these critical principles were generally adopted; and their assertors found to be no *School*, or new heretical Sect, but the ancient primitive Catholic Communion, of which all sects that had any living light in them were but members and subordinate modes. It is, indeed, the most sacred article of this creed to preach and practise universal tolerance. Every literature of the world has been cultivated by the Germans; and to every literature they have studied to give due honour. Shakspeare and Homer, no doubt, occupy alone the loftiest station in the poetical Olympus; but there is space in it for all true Singers out of every age and clime. Ferdusi and the primeval Mythologists of Hindostan live in brotherly union with the Troubadours and ancient Storytellers of the West. The wayward mystic gloom of Calderon, the lurid fire of Dante, the auroral light of Tasso, the clear icy glitter of Racine, all are acknowledged and reverenced; nay in the celestial forecourt an abode has been appointed for the Gressets and Delilles, that no spark of inspiration, no tone of mental music, might remain unrecognised. The Germans study foreign nations in a spirit which deserves to be oftener imitated. It is their honest endeavour to understand each, with its own peculiarities, in its own special manner of existing; not that they may praise it, or censure it, or attempt to alter it, but simply that they may see this manner of existing as the nation itself sees it, and so participate in whatever worth or beauty it has brought into being. Of all literatures, accordingly, the Ger-

[5] It began in Schiller's *Musenalmanach* for 1797. The *Xenien* (a series of philosophic epigrams jointly by Schiller and Goethe) descended there unexpectedly, like a flood of ethereal fire, on the German literary world; quickening all that was noble into new life, but visiting the ancient empire of Dulness with astonishment and unknown pangs. The agitation was extreme; scarcely since the age of Luther has there been such stir and strife in the intellect of Germany; indeed, scarcely since that age has there been a controversy, if we consider its ultimate bearings on the best and noblest interests of mankind, so important as this, which, for the time, seemed only to turn on metaphysical subtleties, and matters of mere elegance. Its farther applications became apparent by degrees.

man has the best as well as the most translations; men like Goethe, Schiller, Wieland, Schlegel, Tieck, have not disdained this task. Of Shakspeare there are three entire versions admitted to be good; and we know not how many partial, or considered as bad. In their criticisms of him, we ourselves have long ago admitted that no such clear judgment or hearty appreciation of his merits had ever been exhibited by any critic of our own.

To attempt stating in separate aphorisms the doctrines of this new poetical system, would, in such space as is now allowed us, be to insure them of misapprehension. The science of Criticism, as the Germans practise it, is no study of an hour; for it springs from the depths of thought, and remotely or immediately connects itself with the subtlest problems of all philosophy. One characteristic of it we may state, the obvious parent of many others. Poetic beauty, in its pure essence, is not, by this theory, as by all our theories, from Hume's to Alison's, derived from anything external, or of merely intellectual origin; not from association, or any reflex or reminiscence of mere sensations; nor from natural love, either of imitation, of similarity in dissimilarity, of excitement by contrast, or of seeing difficulties overcome. On the contrary, it is assumed as underived; not borrowing its existence from such sources, but as lending to most of these their significance and principal charm for the mind. It dwells and is born in the inmost Spirit of Man, united to all love of Virtue, to all true belief in God; or rather, it is one with this love and this belief, another phase of the same highest principle in the mysterious infinitude of the human Soul. To apprehend this beauty of poetry, in its full and purest brightness, is not easy, but difficult; thousands on thousands eagerly read poems, and attain not the smallest taste of it; yet to all uncorrupted hearts, some effulgences of this heavenly glory are here and there revealed; and to apprehend it clearly and wholly, to acquire and maintain a sense and heart that sees and worships it, is the last perfection of all humane culture. With mere readers for amusement, therefore, this Criticism has, and can have, nothing to do; these find their amusement, in less or greater measure, and the nature of Poetry remains forever hidden from them in deepest concealment. On all hands, there is no truce given to the hypothesis, that the ultimate object of the poet is to please. Sensation, even of the finest and

most rapturous sort, is not the end, but the means. Art is to be loved, not because of its effects, but because of itself; not because it is useful for spiritual pleasure, or even for moral culture, but because it is Art, and the highest in man, and the soul of all Beauty. To inquire after its *utility*, would be like inquiring after the *utility* of a God, or, what to the Germans would sound stranger than it does to us, the *utility* of Virtue and Religion.—On these particulars, the authenticity of which we might verify, not so much by citation of individual passages, as by reference to the scope and spirit of whole treatises, we must for the present leave our readers to their own reflections. Might we advise them, it would be to inquire farther, and, if possible, to see the matter with their own eyes.

Meanwhile, that all this must tend, among the Germans, to raise the general standard of Art, and of what an Artist ought to be in his own esteem and that of others, will be readily inferred. The character of a Poet does, accordingly, stand higher with the Germans than with most nations. That he is a man of integrity as a man; of zeal and honest diligence in his art, and of true manly feeling towards all men, is of course presupposed. Of persons that are not so, but employ their gift, in rhyme or otherwise, for brutish or malignant purposes, it is understood that such lie without the limits of Criticism, being subjects not for the judge of Art, but for the judge of Police. But even with regard to the fair tradesman, who offers his talent in open market, to do work of a harmless and acceptable sort for hire,—with regard to this person also, their opinion is very low. The 'Bread-artist,' as they call him, can gain no reverence for himself from these men. 'Unhappy mortal,' says the mild but lofty-minded Schiller, 'Unhappy mortal, that, with Science and 'Art, the noblest of all instruments, effectest and attemptest 'nothing more than the day-drudge with the meanest; that, in 'the domain of perfect Freedom, bearest about in thee the 'spirit of a Slave!' Nay, to the genuine Poet they deny even the privilege of regarding what so many cherish, under the title of their 'fame,' as the best and highest of all. Hear Schiller again:

'The Artist, it is true, is the son of his age; but pity for him if he is its pupil, or even its favourite! Let some beneficent divinity snatch him, when a suckling, from the breast of his mother, and nurse him with the milk of a better time, that he may ripen to his full stature beneath

a distant Grecian sky. And having grown to manhood, let him return, a foreign shape, into his century; not, however, to delight it by his presence, but dreadful, like the Son of Agamemnon, to purify it. The matter of his works he will take from the present, but their form he will derive from a nobler time; nay from beyond all time, from the absolute unchanging unity of his own nature. Here, from the pure æther of his spiritual essence, flows down the Fountain of Beauty, uncontaminated by the pollutions of ages and generations, which roll to and fro in their turbid vortex far beneath it. His matter Caprice can dishonour, as she has ennobled it; but the chaste form is withdrawn from her mutations. The Roman of the first century had long bent the knee before his Cæsars, when the statues of Rome were still standing erect; the temples continued holy to the eye, when their gods had long been a laughing-stock; and the abominations of a Nero and a Commodus were silently rebuked by the style of the edifice, which lent them its concealment. Man has lost his dignity, but Art has saved it, and preserved it for him in expressive marbles. Truth still lives in fiction, and from the copy the original will be restored.

'But how is the Artist to guard himself from the corruptions of his time, which on every side assail him? By despising its decisions. Let him look upwards to his dignity and the law, not downwards to his happiness and his wants. Free alike from the vain activity that longs to impress its traces on the fleeting instant, and from the querulous spirit of enthusiasm that measures by the scale of perfection the meagre product of reality, let him leave to mere Understanding, which is here at home, the province of the actual; while *he* strives, by uniting the possible with the necessary, to produce the ideal. This let him imprint and express in fiction and truth; imprint it in the sport of his imagination and the earnest of his actions; imprint it in all sensible and spiritual forms, and cast it silently into everlasting time.'[6]

Still higher are Fichte's notions on this subject; or rather, expressed in higher terms, for the central principle is the same both in the philosopher and the poet. According to Fichte, there is a 'Divine Idea' pervading the visible Universe; which visible Universe is indeed but its symbol and sensible manifestation, having in itself no meaning, or even true existence independent of it. To the mass of men this Divine Idea of the world lies hidden: yet to discern it, to seize it, and live wholly in it, is the condition of all genuine virtue, knowledge, freedom; and the end, therefore, of all spiritual effort in every age. Literary Men are the appointed interpreters of this Divine Idea; a perpetual priesthood, we might say, standing forth, generation after

[6] *Über die Aesthetische Erziehung des Menschen*,—On the Æsthetic Education of Man.

generation, as the dispensers and living types of God's everlasting wisdom, to show it in their writings and actions, in such particular form as their own particular times require it in. For each age, by the law of its nature, is different from every other age, and demands a different representation of the Divine Idea, the essence of which is the same in all; so that the literary man of one century is only by mediation and reinterpretation applicable to the wants of another. But in every century, every man who labours, be it in what province he may, to teach others, must first have possessed himself of the Divine Idea, or, at least, be with his whole heart and his whole soul striving after it. If, without possessing it or striving after it, he abide diligently by some material practical department of knowledge, he may indeed still be (says Fichte, in his rugged way) a 'useful hodman;' but should he attempt to deal with the Whole, and to become an architect, he is, in strictness of language, 'Nothing;'—'he is an ambiguous mongrel between the possessor 'of the Idea, and the man who feels himself solidly supported 'and carried on by the common Reality of things: in his fruitless endeavour after the Idea, he has neglected to acquire the 'craft of taking part in this Reality; and so hovers between 'two worlds, without pertaining to either.' Elsewhere he adds:

'There is still, from another point of view, another division in our notion of the Literary Man, and one to us of immediate application. Namely, either the Literary Man has already laid hold of the whole Divine Idea, in so far as it can be comprehended by man, or perhaps of a special portion of this its comprehensible part,—which truly is not possible without at least a clear oversight of the whole;—he has already laid hold of it, penetrated, and made it entirely clear to himself, so that it has become a possession recallable at all times in the same shape to his view, and a component part of his personality: in that case he is a completed and equipt Literary Man, a man who *has* studied. Or else, he is still struggling and striving to make the Idea in general, or that particular portion and point of it, from which onwards he for his part means to penetrate the whole, entirely clear to himself; detached sparkles of light already spring forth on him from all sides, and disclose a higher world before him; but they do not yet unite themselves into an indivisible whole; they vanish from his view as capriciously as they came; he cannot yet bring them under obedience to his freedom: in that case he is a progressing and self-unfolding literary man, a Student. That it be actually the Idea, which is possessed or striven after, is common to both. Should the striving aim merely at the outward form, and the letter of learned culture, there is then produced, when the circle is gone

round, the completed, when it is not yet gone round, the progressing, Bungler (*Stümper*). The latter is more tolerable than the former; for there is still room to hope that, in continuing his travel, he may at some future point be seized by the Idea; but of the first all hope is over.'[7]

From this bold and lofty principle the duties of the Literary Man are deduced with scientific precision; and stated, in all their sacredness and grandeur, with an austere brevity more impressive than any rhetoric. Fichte's metaphysical theory may be called in question, and readily enough misapprehended; but the sublime stoicism of his sentiments will find some response in many a heart. We must add the conclusion of his first Discourse, as a farther illustration of his manner:

'In disquisitions of the sort like ours of today, which all the rest too must resemble, the generality are wont to censure: First, their severity; very often on the goodnatured supposition that the speaker is not aware how much his rigour must displease us; that we have but frankly to let him know this, and then doubtless he will reconsider himself, and soften his statements. Thus, we said above that a man who, after literary culture, had not arrived at knowledge of the Divine Idea, or did not strive towards it, was in strict speech Nothing; and farther down, we said that he was a Bungler. This is in the style of those unmerciful expressions by which philosophers give such offence.—Now, looking away from the present case, that we may front the maxim in its general shape, I remind you that this species of character, without decisive force to renounce all respect for Truth, seeks merely to bargain and cheapen something out of her, whereby he himself on easier terms may attain to some consideration. But Truth, which once for all is as she is, and cannot alter aught of her nature, goes on her way; and there remains for her, in regard to those who desire her not simply because she is true, nothing else but to leave them standing as if they had never addressed her.

'Then farther, discourses of this sort are wont to be censured as unintelligible. Thus I figure to myself,—nowise you, Gentlemen, but some completed Literary Man of the second species, whose eye the disquisition here entered upon chanced to meet, as coming forward, doubting this way and that, and at last reflectively exclaiming: "The Idea, the Divine Idea, that which lies at the bottom of Appearance: what, pray, may *this* mean?" Of such a questioner I would inquire in turn: "What, pray, may this question mean?"—Investigate it strictly, it means in most cases nothing more than: "Under what other names, and in what other formulas, do I already know this same thing, which thou expressest by so strange and to me so unknown a symbol?" And to this again in most cases the only suitable reply were: "Thou knowest this thing not at all, neither under this nor under any other name; and wouldst thou arrive

[7] *Über das Wesen des Gelehrten* (On the Nature of the Literary Man); a Course of Lectures delivered at Erlangen in 1805.

at the knowledge of it, thou must even now begin at the beginning to make study thereof;—and then, most fitly, under that name by which it is here first presented to thee!" '

With such a notion of the Artist, it were a strange inconsistency did Criticism show itself unscientific or lax in estimating the product of his Art. For light on this point, we might refer to the writings of almost any individual among the German critics : take, for instance, the *Charakteristiken* of the two Schlegels, a work too of their younger years ; and say whether in depth, clearness, minute and patient fidelity, these *Characters* have often been surpassed, or the import and poetic worth of so many poets and poems more vividly and accurately brought to view. As an instance of a much higher kind, we might refer to Goethe's criticism of *Hamlet* in his *Wilhelm Meister*. This truly is what may be called the poetry of criticism : for it is in some sort also a creative art ; aiming, at least, to reproduce under a different shape the existing product of the poet ; painting to the intellect what already lay painted to the heart and the imagination. Nor is it over poetry alone that Criticism watches with such loving strictness : the mimic, the pictorial, the musical arts, all modes of representing or addressing the highest nature of man are acknowledged as younger sisters of Poetry, and fostered with like care. Winkelmann's *History of Plastic Art* is known by repute to all readers : and of those who know it by inspection, many may have wondered why such a work has not been added to our own literature, to instruct our own sculptors and painters. On this subject of the plastic arts, we cannot withhold the following little sketch of Goethe's, as a specimen of pictorial criticism in what we consider a superior style. It is of an imaginary Landscape-painter, and his views of Swiss scenery; it will bear to be studied minutely, for there is no word without its meaning :

' He succeeds in representing the cheerful repose of lake prospects, where houses in friendly approximation, imaging themselves in the clear wave, seem as if bathing in its depths ; shores encircled with green hills, behind which rise forest mountains, and icy peaks of glaciers. The tone of colouring in such scenes is gay, mirthfully clear ; the distances as if overflowed with softening vapour, which from watered hollows and river-valleys mounts up grayer and mistier, and indicates their windings. No ess is the master's art to be praised in views from valleys lying nearer the high Alpine ranges, where declivities slope down, luxuriantly overgrown, and fresh streams roll rapidly along by the foot of rocks.

'With exquisite skill, in the deep shady trees of the foreground, he gives the distinctive character of the several species; satisfying us in the form of the whole, as in the structure of the branches, and the details of the leaves; no less so, in the fresh green with its manifold shadings, where soft airs appear as if fanning us with benignant breath, and the lights as if thereby put in motion.

'In the middle-ground, his lively green tone grows fainter by degrees; and at last, on the more distant mountain-tops, passing into weak violet, weds itself with the blue of the sky. But our artist is above all happy in his paintings of high Alpine regions; in seizing the simple greatness and stillness of their character; the wide pastures on the slopes, where dark solitary firs stand forth from the grassy carpet; and from high cliffs foaming brooks rush down. Whether he relieve his pasturages with grazing cattle, or the narrow winding rocky path with mules and laden pack-horses, he paints all with equal truth and richness; still intruduced in the proper place, and not in too great copiousness, they decorate and enliven these scenes, without interrupting, without lessening their peaceful solitude. The execution testifies a master's hand; easy, with a few sure strokes, and yet complete. In his later pieces, he employed glittering English permanent-colours on paper: these pictures, accordingly, are of preëminently blooming tone; cheerful, yet, at the same time, strong and full.

'His views of deep mountain-chasms, where, round and round, nothing fronts us but dead rock, where, in the abyss, overspanned by its bold arch, the wild stream rages, are, indeed, of less attraction than the former: yet their truth excites us; we admire the great effect of the whole, produced, at so little cost, by a few expressive strokes, and masses of local colours.

'With no less accuracy of character can he represent the regions of the topmost Alpine ranges, where neither tree nor shrub any more appears; but only, amid the rocky teeth and snow-summits, a few sunny spots clothe themselves with the soft sward. Beautiful, and balmy and inviting as he colours these spots, he has here wisely forborne to introduce grazing herds; for these regions give food only to the chamois, and perilous employment to the wild-hay-men.'[8]

We have extracted this passage from *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, Goethe's last Novel. The perusal of his whole Works would show, among many other more important facts, that Criticism also is a science of which he is master; that if ever any man had studied Art in all its branches and bearings, from its origin in the depths of the creative spirit, to its mi-

[8] The poor wild-hay-man of the Rigiberg,
Whose trade is, on the brow of the abyss,
To mow the common grass from nooks and shelves
To which the cattle dare not climb.
Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell.*

nutest finish on the canvas of the painter, on the lips of the poet, or under the finger of the musician, he was that man. A nation which appreciates such studies, nay requires and rewards them, cannot, wherever its defects may lie, be defective in judgment of the Arts.

But a weightier question still remains. What has been the fruit of this its high and just judgment on these matters? What has criticism profited it, to the bringing forth of good works? How do its poems and its poets correspond with so lofty a standard? We answer, that on this point also, Germany may rather court investigation than fear it. There are poets in that country who belong to a nobler class than most nations have to show in these days; a class entirely unknown to some nations; and, for the last two centuries, rare in all. We have no hesitation in stating that we see in certain of the best German poets, and those too of our own time, something which associates them, remotely or nearly we say not, but which does associate them with the Masters of Art, the Saints of Poetry, long since departed, and, as we thought, without successors, from the earth, but canonised in the hearts of all generations, and yet living to all by the memory of what they did and were. Glances we do seem to find of that ethereal glory which looks on us in its full brightness from the *Transfiguration* of Raffaelle, from the *Tempest* of Shakspeare; and, in broken but purest and still heart-piercing beams, struggling through the gloom of long ages, from the tragedies of Sophocles, and the weather-worn sculptures of the Parthenon. This is that heavenly spirit which, best seen in the aerial embodiment of poetry, but spreading likewise over all the thoughts and actions of an age, has given us Surreys, Sydneys, Raleighs in court and camp, Cecils in policy, Hookers in divinity, Bacons in philosophy, and Shakspeares and Spensers in song. All hearts that know this, know it to be the highest; and that, in poetry or elsewhere, it alone is true and imperishable. In affirming that any vestige, however feeble, of this divine spirit, is discernible in German poetry, we are aware that we place it above the existing poetry of any other nation.

To prove this bold assertion, logical arguments were at all times unavailing; and, in the present circumstances of the case, more than usually so. Neither will any extract or specimen help us; for it is not in parts, but in whole poems, that

the spirit of a true poet is to be seen. We can, therefore, only name such men as Tieck, Richter, Herder, Schiller, and, above all, Goethe; and ask any reader who has learned to admire wisely our own literature of Queen Elizabeth's age, to peruse these writers also; to study them till he feels that he has understood them, and justly estimated both their light and darkness; and then to pronounce whether it is not, in some degree, as we have said. Are there not tones here of that old melody? Are there not glimpses of that serene soul, that calm harmonious strength, that smiling earnestness, that Love and Faith and Humanity of nature? Do these foreign contemporaries of ours still exhibit, in their characters as men, something of that sterling nobleness, that union of majesty with meekness, which we must ever venerate in those our spiritual fathers? And do their works, in the new form of this century, show forth that old nobleness, not consistent only, with the science, the precision, the scepticism of these days, but wedded to them, incorporated with them, and shining through them like their life and soul? Might it in truth almost seem to us, in reading the prose of Goethe, as if we were reading that of Milton; and of Milton writing with the culture of this time; combining French clearness with old English depth? And of his poetry may it indeed be said that it *is* poetry, and yet the poetry of our own generation; an ideal world, and yet the world we even now live in? — These questions we must leave candid and studious inquirers to answer for themselves; premising only that the secret is not to be found on the surface; that the first reply is likely to be in the negative, but with inquirers of this sort by no means likely to be the final one.

To ourselves, we confess, it has long so appeared. The poetry of Goethe, for instance, we reckon to be Poetry, sometimes in the very highest sense of that word; yet it is no reminiscence, but something actually present and before us; no looking back into an antique Fairyland, divided by impassable abysses from the real world as it lies about us and within us; but a looking round upon that real world itself, now rendered holier to our eyes, and once more become a solemn temple, where the spirit of Beauty still dwells, and is still, under new emblems, to be worshipped as of old. With Goethe, the mythologies of bygone days pass only for what they are: we have no witchcraft or magic in the common acceptation; and spirits

no longer bring with them airs from heaven or blasts from hell; for Pandemonium and the steadfast Empyrean have faded away, since the opinions which they symbolised no longer are. Neither does he bring his heroes from remote Oriental climates, or periods of Chivalry, or any section either of Atlantis or the Age of Gold; feeling that the reflex of these things is cold and faint, and only hangs like a cloud-picture in the distance, beautiful but delusive, and which even the simplest know to be a delusion. The end of Poetry is higher: she must dwell in Reality, and become manifest to men in the forms among which they live and move. And this is what we prize in Goethe, and more or less in Schiller and the rest; all of whom, each in his own way, are writers of a similar aim. The coldest sceptic, the most callous worldling, sees not the actual aspects of life more sharply than they are here delineated: the Nineteenth Century stands before us, in all its contradiction and perplexity; barren, mean and baleful, as we have all known it; yet here no longer mean or barren, but enamelled into beauty in the poet's spirit; for its secret significance is laid open, and thus, as it were, the life-giving fire that slumbers in it is called forth, and flowers and foliage, as of old, are springing on its bleakest wildernesses, and overmantling its sternest cliffs. For these men have not only the clear eye, but the loving heart. They have penetrated into the mystery of Nature; after long trial they have been initiated; and to unwearied endeavour, Art has at last yielded her secret; and thus can the Spirit of our Age, embodied in fair imaginations, look forth on us, earnest and full of meaning, from their works. As the first and indispensable condition of good poets, they are wise and good men: much they have seen and suffered, and they have conquered all this, and made it all their own; they have known life in its heights and depths, and mastered it in both, and can teach others what it is, and how to lead it rightly. Their minds are as a mirror to us, where the perplexed image of our own being is reflected back in soft and clear interpretation. Here mirth and gravity are blended together; wit rests on deep devout wisdom, as the green-sward with its flowers must rest on the rock, whose foundations reach downward to the centre. In a word, they are believers; but their faith is no sallow plant of darkness; it is green and flowery, for it grows in the sunlight. And this faith is the doctrine they have to

teach us, the sense which, under every noble and graceful form, it is their endeavour to set forth:

> 'As all Nature's thousand changes
> But one changeless God proclaim,
> So in Art's wide kingdoms ranges
> One sole meaning, still the same:
> This is Truth, eternal Reason,
> Which from Beauty takes its dress,
> And, serene through time and season,
> Stands for aye in loveliness.'

Such indeed is the end of Poetry at all times; yet in no recent literature known to us, except the German, has it been so far attained; nay, perhaps, so much as consciously and steadfastly attempted.

The reader feels that if this our opinion be in any measure true, it is a truth of no ordinary moment. It concerns not this writer or that; but it opens to us new views on the fortune of spiritual culture with ourselves and all nations. Have we not heard gifted men complaining that Poetry had passed away without return; that creative imagination consorted not with vigour of intellect, and that in the cold light of science there was no longer room for faith in things unseen? The old simplicity of heart was gone; earnest emotions must no longer be expressed in earnest symbols; beauty must recede into elegance, devoutness of character be replaced by clearness of thought, and grave wisdom by shrewdness and *persiflage*. Such things we have heard, but hesitated to believe them. If the poetry of the Germans, and this not by theory but by example, have proved, or even begun to prove, the contrary, it will deserve far higher encomiums than any we have passed upon it.

In fact, the past and present aspect of German literature illustrates the literature of England in more than one way. Its history keeps pace with that of ours; for so closely are all European communities connected, that the phases of mind in any one country, so far as these represent its general circumstances and intellectual position, are but modified repetitions of its phases in every other. We hinted above that the Saxon School corresponded with what might be called the Scotch: Cramer was not unlike our Blair; Von Cronegk might be compared with Michael Bruce; and Rabener and Gellert with Beattie and Logan. To this mild and cultivated period, there

succeeded, as with us, a partial abandonment of poetry, in favour of political and philosophical Illumination. Then was the time when hot war was declared against Prejudice of all sorts; Utility was set up for the universal measure of mental as well as material value; poetry, except of an economical and preceptorial character, was found to be the product of a rude age; and religious enthusiasm was but derangement in the biliary organs. Then did the Prices and Condorcets of Germany indulge in day-dreams of perfectibility; a new social order was to bring back the Saturnian era to the world; and philosophers sat on their sunny Pisgah, looking back over dark savage deserts, and forward into a land flowing with milk and honey.

This period also passed away, with its good and its evil; of which chiefly the latter seems to be remembered; for we scarcely ever find the affair alluded to, except in terms of contempt, by the title *Aufklärerei* (Illuminationism); and its partisans, in subsequent satirical controversies, received the nickname of *Philistern* (Philistines), which the few scattered remnants of them still bear, both in writing and speech. Poetry arose again, and in a new and singular shape. The *Sorrows of Werter*, *Götz von Berlichingen*, and the *Robbers*, may stand as patriarchs and representatives of three separate classes, which, commingled in various proportions, or separately coexisting, now with the preponderance of this, now of that, occupied the whole popular literature of Germany till near the end of the last century. These were the Sentimentalists, the Chivalry-play writers, and other gorgeous and outrageous persons; as a whole, now pleasantly denominated the *Kraftmänner*, literally, Power-men. They dealt in sceptical lamentation, mysterious enthusiasm, frenzy and suicide: they recurred with fondness to the Feudal Ages, delineating many a battlemented keep, and swart buff-belted man-at-arms; for in reflection, as in action, they studied to be strong, vehement, rapidly effective; of battle-tumult, love-madness, heroism and despair, there was no end. This literary period is called the *Sturm- und Drang-Zeit*, the Storm- and Stress-Period; for great indeed was the woe and fury of these Power-men. Beauty, to their mind, seemed synonymous with Strength. All passion was poetical, so it were but fierce enough. Their head moral virtue was pride; their *beau idéal* of manhood was some transcript of

Milton's Devil. Often they inverted Bolingbroke's plan, and instead of 'patronising Providence,' did directly the opposite; raging with extreme animation against Fate in general, because it enthralled free virtue; and with clenched hands, or sounding shields, hurling defiance towards the vault of heaven.

These Power-men are gone too; and, with few exceptions, save the three originals above named, their works have already followed them. The application of all this to our own literature is too obvious to require much exposition. Have not we also had our Power-men? And will not, as in Germany, to us likewise a milder, a clearer, and a truer time come round? Our Byron was in his youth but what Schiller and Goethe had been in theirs: yet the author of *Werter* wrote *Iphigenie* and *Torquato Tasso;* and he who began with the *Robbers* ended with *Wilhelm Tell.* With longer life, all things were to have been hoped for from Byron: for he loved truth in his inmost heart, and would have discovered at last that his Corsairs and Harolds were not true. It was otherwise appointed. But with one man all hope does not die. If this way is the right one, we too shall find it. The poetry of Germany, meanwhile, we cannot but regard as well deserving to be studied, in this as in other points of view: it is distinctly an advance beyond any other known to us; whether on the right path or not, may be still uncertain; but a path selected by Schillers and Goethes, and vindicated by Schlegels and Tiecks, is surely worth serious examination. For the rest, need we add that it is study for self-instruction, nowise for purposes of imitation, that we recommend? Among the deadliest of poetical sins is imitation; for if every man must have his own way of thought, and his own way of expressing it, much more every nation. But of danger on that side, in the country of Shakspeare and Milton, there seems little to be feared.

We come now to the second grand objection against German literature, its *Mysticism.* In treating of a subject itself so vague and dim, it were well if we tried, in the first place, to settle, with more accuracy, what each of the two contending parties really means to say or to contradict regarding it. Mysticism is a word in the mouths of all: yet, of the hundred, perhaps not one has ever asked himself what this opprobrious epithet properly signified in his mind; or where the boundary

between true science and this Land of Chimeras was to be laid down. Examined strictly, *mystical*, in most cases, will turn out to be merely synonymous with *not understood*. Yet surely there may be haste and oversight here; for it is well known, that, to the understanding of anything, *two* conditions are equally required; *intelligibility* in the thing itself being no whit more indispensable than *intelligence* in the examiner of it. "I am bound to find you in reasons, Sir," said Johnson, "but not in brains;" a speech of the most shocking unpoliteness, yet truly enough expressing the state of the case.

It may throw some light on this question, if we remind our readers of the following fact. In the field of human investigation there are objects of two sorts: First, the *visible*, including not only such as are material, and may be seen by the bodily eye; but all such, likewise, as may be represented in a *shape*, before the mind's eye, or in any way pictured there: And, secondly, the *invisible*, or such as are not only unseen by human eyes, but as cannot be seen by any eye; not objects of sense at all; not capable, in short, of being *pictured* or imaged in the mind, or in any way represented by a *shape* either without the mind or within it. If any man shall here turn upon us, and assert that there are no such invisible objects; that whatever cannot be so pictured or imagined (meaning *imaged*) is nothing, and the science that relates to it nothing; we shall regret the circumstance. We shall request him, however, to consider seriously and deeply within himself, what he means simply by these two words, GOD and his own SOUL; and whether he finds that visible shape and true existence are here also one and the same? If he still persist in denial, we have nothing for it, but to wish him good speed on his own separate path of inquiry; and he and we will agree to differ on this subject of mysticism, as on so many more important ones.

Now, whoever has a material and visible object to treat, be it of Natural Science, Political Philosophy, or any such externally and sensibly existing department, may represent it to his own mind, and convey it to the minds of others, as it were, by a direct diagram, more complex indeed than a geometrical diagram, but still with the same sort of precision; and, provided his diagram be *complete*, and the *same* both to himself and his reader, he may reason of it, and discuss it, with the clearness, and, in some sort, the certainty of geometry itself.

If he do not so reason of it, this must be for want of comprehension to image out the *whole* of it, or of distinctness to convey the *same* whole to his reader: the diagrams of the two are different; the conclusions of the one diverge from those of the other, and the obscurity here, provided the reader be a man of sound judgment and due attentiveness, results from incapacity on the part of the writer. In such a case, the latter is justly regarded as a man of imperfect intellect; he grasps more than he can carry; he confuses what, with ordinary faculty, might be rendered clear; he is not a mystic, but, what is much worse, a dunce. Another matter it is, however, when the object to be treated of belongs to the invisible and immaterial class; cannot be pictured out even by the writer himself, much less, in ordinary symbols, set before the reader. In this case, it is evident, the difficulties of comprehension are increased an hundred-fold. Here it will require long, patient and skilful effort, both from the writer and the reader, before the two can so much as speak together; before the former can make known to the latter, not *how* the matter stands, but even *what* the matter *is*, which they have to investigate in concert. He must devise new means of explanation, describe conditions of mind in which this invisible idea arises, the false persuasions that eclipse it, the false shows that may be mistaken for it, the glimpses of it that appear elsewhere; in short, strive, by a thousand well-devised methods, to guide his reader up to the perception of it; in all which, moreover, the reader must faithfully and toilsomely cooperate with him, if any fruit is to come of their mutual endeavour. Should the latter take up his ground too early, and affirm to himself that now he has seized what he still has not seized; that this and nothing else is the thing aimed at by his teacher, the consequences are plain enough: disunion, darkness and contradiction between the two; the writer has written for another man, and this reader, after long provocation, quarrels with him finally, and quits him as a *mystic*.

Nevertheless, after all these limitations, we shall not hesitate to admit, that there is in the German mind a tendency to mysticism, properly so called; as perhaps there is, unless carefully guarded against, in all minds tempered like theirs. It is a fault; but one hardly separable from the excellences we admire most in them. A simple, tender and devout nature, seized by some touch of divine Truth, and of this perhaps

under some rude enough symbol, is rapt with it into a whirlwind of unutterable thoughts; wild gleams of splendour dart to and fro in the eye of the seer, but the vision will not abide with him, and yet he feels that its light is light from heaven, and precious to him beyond all price. A simple nature, a George Fox or a Jacob Böhme, ignorant of all the ways of men, of the dialect in which they speak, or the forms by which they think, is labouring with a poetic, a religious idea, which, like all such ideas, must express itself by word and act, or consume the heart it dwells in. Yet how shall he speak; how shall he pour forth into other souls that of which his own soul is full even to bursting? He cannot speak to us; he knows not *our* state, and cannot make known to us his own. His words are an inexplicable rhapsody, a speech in an unknown tongue. Whether there is meaning in it to the speaker himself, and how much or how true, we shall never ascertain; for it is not in the language of men, but of one man who had not learned the language of men; and, with himself, the key to its full interpretation was lost from amongst us. These are mystics; men who either know not clearly their own meaning, or at least cannot put it forth in formulas of thought, whereby others, with whatever difficulty, may apprehend it. Was their meaning clear to themselves, gleams of it will yet shine through, how ignorantly and unconsciously soever it may have been delivered; was it still wavering and obscure, no science could have delivered it wisely. In either case, much more in the last, they merit and obtain the name of mystics. To scoffers they are a ready and cheap prey; but sober persons understand that pure evil is as unknown in this lower Universe as pure good; and that even in mystics, of an honest and deep-feeling heart, there may be much to reverence, and of the rest more to pity than to mock.

But it is not to apologise for Böhme, or Novalis, or the school of Theosophus and Flood, that we have here undertaken. Neither is it on such persons that the charge of mysticism brought against the Germans mainly rests. Böhme is little known among us; Novalis, much as he deserves knowing, not at all; nor is it understood, that, in their own country, these men rank higher than they do, or might do, with ourselves. The chief mystics in Germany, it would appear, are the Transcendental Philosophers, Kant, Fichte, and Schelling! With these is the chosen seat of mysticism, these are its 'tenebrific con-

stellation,' from which it 'doth ray out darkness' over the earth. Among a certain class of thinkers, does a frantic exaggeration in sentiment, a crude fever-dream in opinion, anywhere break forth, it is directly labelled as Kantism; and the moon-struck speculator is, for the time, silenced and put to shame by this epithet. For often, in such circles, Kant's Philosophy is not only an absurdity, but a wickedness and a horror; the pious and peaceful sage of Königsberg passes for a sort of Necromancer and Black-artist in Metaphysics; his doctrine is a region of boundless baleful gloom, too cunningly broken here and there by splendours of unholy fire; spectres and tempting demons people it, and, hovering over fathomless abysses, hang gay and gorgeous air-castles, into which the hapless traveller is seduced to enter, and so sinks to rise no more.

If anything in the history of Philosophy could surprise us, it might well be this. Perhaps among all the metaphysical writers of the eighteenth century, including Hume and Hartley themselves, there is not one that so ill meets the conditions of a mystic as this same Immanuel Kant. A quiet, vigilant, clear-sighted man, who had become distinguished to the world in mathematics before he attempted philosophy; who in his writings generally, on this and other subjects, is perhaps characterised by no quality so much as precisely by the distinctness of his conceptions, and the sequence and iron strictness with which he reasons. To our own minds, in the little that we know of him, he has more than once recalled Father Boscovich in Natural Philosophy; so piercing, yet so sure; so concise, so still, so simple; with such clearness and composure does he mould the complicacy of his subject; and so firm, sharp and definite are the results he evolves from it.[9] Right or wrong as his hypothesis may be, no one that knows him will suspect that he himself had not seen it, and seen over it; had not meditated it with calmness and deep thought, and studied throughout to expound it with scientific rigour. Neither, as we often hear, is there any superhuman faculty required to follow him. We venture to assure such of our readers as are in any measure used to metaphysical study, that the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* is

[9] We have heard that the Latin Translation of his Works is unintelligible, the Translator himself not having understood it; also that Villers is no safe guide in the study of him. Neither Villers nor those Latin Works are known to us.

by no means the hardest task they have tried. It is true, there is an unknown and forbidding terminology to be mastered; but is not this the case also with Chemistry, and Astronomy, and all other Sciences that deserve the name of science? It is true, a careless or unprepared reader will find Kant's writing a riddle but will a reader of this sort make much of Newton's *Principia*, or D'Alembert's *Calculus of Variations?* He will make nothing of them; perhaps less than nothing; for if he trust to his own judgment, he will pronounce them madness. Yet if the Philosophy of Mind is any philosophy at all, Physics and Mathematics must be plain subjects compared with it. But these latter are happy, not only in the fixedness and simplicity of their methods, but also in the universal acknowledgment of their claim to that prior and continual intensity of application, without which all progress in any science is impossible; though more than one may be attempted without it; and blamed, because without it they will yield no result.

The truth is, German Philosophy differs not more widely from ours in the substance of its doctrines than in its manner of communicating them. The class of disquisitions named *Kamin-Philosophie* (Parlour-fire Philosophy) in Germany, is held in little estimation there. No right treatise on anything, it is believed, least of all on the nature of the human mind, can be profitably read, unless the reader himself coöperates: the blessing of half-sleep in such cases is denied him; he must be alert, and strain every faculty, or it profits nothing. Philosophy, with these men, pretends to be a Science, nay the living principle and soul of all Sciences, and must be treated and studied scientifically, or not studied and treated at all. Its doctrines should be present with every cultivated writer; its spirit should pervade every piece of composition, how slight or popular soever: but to treat itself popularly would be a degradation and an impossibility. Philosophy dwells aloft in the Temple of Science, the divinity of its inmost shrine; her dictates descend among men, but she herself descends not; whoso would behold her, must climb with long and laborious effort; nay still linger in the forecourt, till manifold trial have proved him worthy of admission into the interior solemnities.

It is the false notion prevalent respecting the objects aimed at, and the purposed manner of attaining them, in German Philosophy, that causes, in great part, this disappointment of

our attempts to study it, and the evil report which the disappointed naturally enough bring back with them. Let the reader believe us, the Critical Philosophers, whatever they may be, are no mystics, and have no fellowship with mystics. What a mystic is, we have said above. But Kant, Fichte, and Schelling, are men of cool judgment, and determinate energetic character; men of science and profound and universal investigation; nowhere does the world, in all its bearings, spiritual or material, theoretic or practical, lie pictured in clearer or truer colours than in such heads as these. We have heard Kant estimated as a spiritual brother of Böhme: as justly might we take Sir Isaac Newton for a spiritual brother of Baron Swedenborg, and Laplace's *Mechanism of the Heavens* for a peristyle to the *Vision of the New Jerusalem*. That this is no extravagant comparison, we appeal to any man acquainted with any single volume of Kant's writings. Neither, though Schelling's system differs still more widely from ours, can we reckon Schelling a mystic. He is a man evidently of deep insight into individual things; speaks wisely, and reasons with the nicest accuracy, on all matters where we understand his data. Fairer might it be in us to say that we had not yet appreciated his truth, and *therefore* could not appreciate his error. But above all, the mysticism of Fichte might astonish us. The cold, colossal, adamantine spirit, standing erect and clear, like a Cato Major among degenerate men; fit to have been the teacher of the Stoa, and to have discoursed of Beauty and Virtue in the groves of Academe! Our reader has seen some words of Fichte's: are these like words of a mystic? We state Fichte's character, as it is known and admitted by men of all parties among the Germans, when we say that so robust an intellect, a soul so calm, so lofty, massive and immovable, has not mingled in philosophical discussion since the time of Luther. We figure his motionless look, had he heard this charge of mysticism! For the man rises before us, amid contradiction and debate, like a granite mountain amid clouds and wind. Ridicule, of the best that could be commanded, has been already tried against him; but it could not avail. What was the wit of a thousand wits to him? The cry of a thousand choughs assaulting that old cliff of granite: seen from the summit, these, as they winged the midway air, showed scarce so gross as beetles, and their cry was seldom even audible. Fichte's opinions may be true or

false; but his character, as a thinker, can be slightly valued only by such as know it ill; and as a man, approved by action and suffering, in his life and in his death, he ranks with a class of men who were common only in better ages than ours.

The Critical Philosophy has been regarded by persons of approved judgment, and nowise directly implicated in the furthering of it, as distinctly the greatest intellectual achievement of the century in which it came to light. August Wilhelm Schlegel has stated in plain terms his belief, that in respect of its probable influence on the moral culture of Europe, it stands on a line with the Reformation. We mention Schlegel as a man whose opinion has a known value among ourselves. But the worth of Kant's philosophy is not to be gathered from votes alone. The noble system of morality, the purer theology, the lofty views of man's nature derived from it, nay perhaps the very discussion of such matters, to which it gave so strong an impetus, have told with remarkable and beneficial influence on the whole spiritual character of Germany. No writer of any importance in that country, be he acquainted or not with the Critical Philosophy, but breathes a spirit of devoutness and elevation more or less directly drawn from it. Such men as Goethe and Schiller cannot exist without effect in any literature or in any century: but if one circumstance more than another has contributed to forward their endeavours, and introduce that higher tone into the literature of Germany, it has been this philosophical system; to which, in wisely believing its results, or even in wisely denying them, all that was lofty and pure in the genius of poetry, or the reason of man, so readily allied itself.

That such a system must, in the end, become known among ourselves, as it is already becoming known in France and Italy, and over all Europe, no one acquainted in any measure with the character of this matter, and the character of England, will hesitate to predict. Doubtless it will be studied here, and by heads adequate to do it justice; it will be investigated duly and thoroughly; and settled in our minds on the footing which belongs to it, and where thenceforth it must continue. Respecting the degrees of truth and error which will then be found to exist in Kant's system, or in the modifications it has since received, and is still receiving, we desire to be understood as making no estimate, and little qualified to make any. We would

have it studied and known, on general grounds ; because even the errors of such men are instructive ; and because, without a large admixture of truth, no error *can* exist under such combinations, and become diffused so widely. To judge of it we pretend not : we are still inquirers in the mere outskirts of the matter ; and it is but inquiry that we wish to see promoted.

Meanwhile, as an advance or first step towards this, we may state something of what has most struck ourselves as characterising Kant's system ; as distinguishing it from every other known to us ; and chiefly from the Metaphysical Philosophy which is taught in Britain, or rather which *was* taught; for, on looking round, we see not that there is any such Philosophy in existence at the present day.[10] The Kantist, in direct contradiction to Locke and all his followers, both of the French and English or Scotch school, commences from within, and proceeds outwards ; instead of commencing from without, and, with various precautions and hesitations, endeavouring to proceed inwards. The ultimate aim of all Philosophy must be to interpret appearances,—from the given symbol to ascertain the thing. Now the first step towards this, the aim of what may be called Primary or Critical Philosophy, must be to find some indubitable principle ; to fix ourselves on some unchangeable basis ; to discover what the Germans call the *Urwahr*, the

[10] The name of Dugald Stewart is a name venerable to all Europe, and to none more dear and venerable than to ourselves. Nevertheless his writings are not a Philosophy, but a making ready for one. He does not enter on the field to till it ; he only encompasses it with fences, invites cultivators, and drives away intruders : often (fallen on evil days) he is reduced to long arguments with the passers-by, to prove that it *is* a field, that this so highly prized domain of his is, in truth, soil and substance, not clouds and shadow. We regard his discussions on the nature of Philosophic Language, and his unwearied efforts to set forth and guard against its fallacies, as worthy of all acknowledgment ; as indeed forming the greatest, perhaps the only true improvement, which Philosophy has received among us in our age. It is only to a superficial observer that the import of these discussions can seem trivial ; rightly understood, they give sufficient and final answer to Hartley's and Darwin's, and all other possible forms of Materialism, the grand Idolatry, as we may rightly call it, by which, in all times, the true Worship, that of the Invisible, has been polluted and withstood. Mr. Stewart has written warmly against Kant ; but it would surprise him to find how much of a Kantist he himself essentially is. Has not the whole scope of his labours been to reconcile what a Kantist would call his Understanding with his Reason ; a noble, but still too fruitless effort to overarch the chasm which, for all minds but his own, separates his Science from his Religion ? We regard the assiduous study of his Works as the best preparation for studying those of Kant.

Primitive Truth, the necessarily, absolutely and eternally *True*. This necessarily True, this absolute basis of Truth, Locke silently, and Reid and his followers with more tumult, find in a certain modified Experience, and evidence of Sense, in the universal and natural persuasion of all men. Not so the Germans: they deny that there is here any absolute Truth, or that any Philosophy whatever can be built on such a basis; nay they go to the length of asserting, that such an appeal even to the universal persuasions of mankind, gather them with what precautions you may, amounts to a total abdication of Philosophy, strictly so called, and renders not only its farther progress, but its very existence, impossible. What, they would say, have the persuasions, or instinctive beliefs, or whatever they are called, of men, to do in this matter? Is it not the object of Philosophy to enlighten, and rectify, and many times directly contradict these very beliefs? Take, for instance, the voice of all generations of men on the subject of Astronomy. Will there, out of any age or climate, be one dissentient against the *fact* of the Sun's going round the Earth? Can any evidence be clearer; is there any persuasion more universal, any belief more instinctive? And yet the Sun moves no hairsbreadth; but stands in the centre of his Planets, let us vote as we please. So is it likewise with our evidence for an external independent existence of Matter, and, in general, with our whole argument against Hume; whose reasonings, from the premises admitted both by him and us, the Germans affirm to be rigorously consistent and legitimate, and, on these premises, altogether uncontroverted and incontrovertible. British Philosophy, since the time of Hume, appears to them nothing more than a 'laborious and 'unsuccessful striving to build dike after dike in front of our 'Churches and Judgment-halls, and so turn back from them the 'deluge of Scepticism, with which that extraordinary writer 'overflowed us, and still threatens to destroy whatever we value 'most.' This is August Wilhelm Schlegel's verdict; given in words equivalent to these.

The Germans take up the matter differently, and would assail Hume, not in his outworks, but in the centre of his citadel. They deny his first principle, that Sense is the only inlet of Knowledge, that Experience is the primary ground of Belief. Their Primitive Truth, however, they seek, not historically and by experiment, in the universal persuasions of men, but by in-

tuition, in the deepest and purest nature of Man. Instead of attempting, which they consider vain, to prove the existence of God, Virtue, an immaterial Soul, by inferences drawn, as the conclusion of all Philosophy, from the world of Sense, they find these things written as the beginning of all Philosophy, in obscured but ineffaceable characters, within our inmost being; and themselves first affording any certainty and clear meaning to that very world of Sense, by which we endeavour to demonstrate them. God *is*, nay alone *is*, for with like emphasis we cannot say that anything else is. This is the Absolute, the Primitively True, which the philosopher seeks. Endeavouring, by logical argument, to prove the existence of God, a Kantist might say, would be like taking out a candle to look for the sun; nay, gaze steadily into your candle-light, and the sun himself may be invisible. To open the inward eye to the sight of this Primitively True; or rather we might call it, to clear off the Obscurations of Sense, which eclipse this truth within us, so that we may see it, and believe it not only to be true, but the foundation and essence of all other truth,—may, in such language as we are here using, be said to be the problem of Critical Philosophy.

In this point of view, Kant's system may be thought to have a remote affinity to those of Malebranche and Descartes. But if they in some measure agree as to their aim, there is the widest difference as to the means. We state what to ourselves has long appeared the grand characteristic of Kant's Philosophy, when we mention his distinction, seldom perhaps expressed so broadly, but uniformly implied, between Understanding and Reason (*Verstand* and *Vernunft*). To most of our readers this may seem a distinction without a difference: nevertheless, to the Kantists it is by no means such. They believe that both Understanding and Reason are organs, or rather, we should say, modes of operation, by which the mind discovers truth; but they think that their manner of proceeding is essentially different; that their provinces are separable and distinguishable, nay that it is of the last importance to separate and distinguish them. Reason, the Kantists say, is of a higher nature than Understanding; it works by more subtle methods, on higher objects, and requires a far finer culture for its development, indeed in many men it is never developed at all: but its results are no less certain, nay rather, they are much more so;

for Reason discerns Truth itself, the absolutely and primitively *True;* while Understanding discerns only *relations*, and cannot decide without *if*. The proper province of Understanding is all, strictly speaking, *real*, practical and material knowledge, Mathematics, Physics, Political Economy, the adaptation of means to ends in the whole business of life. In this province it is the strength and universal implement of the mind: an indispensable servant, without which, indeed, existence itself would be impossible. Let it not step beyond this province, however; not usurp the province of Reason, which it is appointed to obey, and cannot rule over without ruin to the whole spiritual man. Should Understanding attempt to prove the existence of God, it ends, if thorough-going and consistent with itself, in Atheism, or a faint possible Theism, which scarcely differs from this: should it speculate of Virtue, it ends in *Utility*, making Prudence and a sufficiently cunning love of Self the highest good. Consult Understanding about the Beauty of Poetry, and it asks, Where is this Beauty? or discovers it at length in rhythms and fitnesses, and male and female rhymes. Witness also its everlasting paradoxes on Necessity and the Freedom of the Will; its ominous silence on the end and meaning of man; and the enigma which, under such inspection, the whole purport of existence becomes.

Nevertheless, say the Kantists, there is a truth in these things. Virtue is Virtue, and not Prudence; not less surely than the angle in a semicircle is a right angle, and no trapezium: Shakspeare is a Poet, and Boileau is none, think of it as you may: neither is it more certain that I myself exist, than that God exists, infinite, eternal, invisible, the same yesterday, today and forever. To discern these truths is the province of Reason, which therefore is to be cultivated as the highest faculty in man. Not by logic and argument does it work; yet surely and clearly may it be taught to work: and its domain lies in that higher region whither logic and argument cannot reach; in that holier region, where Poetry, and Virtue and Divinity abide, in whose presence Understanding wavers and recoils, dazzled into utter darkness by that 'sea of light,' at once the fountain and the termination of all true knowledge.

Will the Kantists forgive us for the loose and popular manner in which we must here speak of these things, to bring them in any measure before the eyes of our readers?—It may illus-

trate the distinction still farther, if we say, that in the opinion of a Kantist the French are of all European nations the most gifted with Understanding, and the most destitute of Reason;[11] that David Hume had no forecast of this latter; and that Shakspeare and Luther dwelt perennially in its purest sphere.

Of the vast, nay in these days boundless, importance of this distinction, could it be scientifically established, we need remind no thinking man. For the rest, far be it from the reader to suppose that this same Reason is but a new appearance, under another name, of our own old 'Wholesome Prejudice,' so well known to most of us! Prejudice, wholesome or unwholesome, is a personage for whom the German Philosophers disclaim all shadow of respect; nor do the vehement among them hide their deep disdain for all and sundry who fight under her flag. Truth is to be loved purely and solely because it is true. With moral, political, religious considerations, high and dear as they may otherwise be, the Philosopher, as such, has no concern. To look at them would but perplex him, and distract his vision from the task in his hands. Calmly he constructs his theorem, as the Geometer does his, without hope or fear, save that he may or may not find the solution; and stands in the middle, by the one, it may be, accused as an Infidel, by the other as an Enthusiast and a Mystic, till the tumult ceases, and what was true, is and continues true to the end of all time.

Such are some of the high and momentous questions treated of, by calm, earnest and deeply meditative men, in this system of Philosophy, which to the wiser minds among us is still unknown, and by the unwiser is spoken of and regarded in such manner as we see. The profoundness, subtlety, extent of investigation, which the answer of these questions presupposes, need not be farther pointed out. With the truth or falsehood of the system, we have here, as already stated, no concern: our aim has been, so far as might be done, to show it as it appeared to us; and to ask such of our readers as pursue these studies, whether this also is not worthy of some study. The reply we must now leave to themselves.

As an appendage to the charge of Mysticism brought against the Germans, there is often added the seemingly incongruous

[11] Schelling has said as much or more (*Methode des Academischen Studium*, pp. 105-111), in terms which we could wish we had space to transcribe.

one of Irreligion. On this point also we had much to say; but must for the present decline it. Meanwhile, let the reader be assured, that to the charge of Irreligion, as to so many others, the Germans will plead not guilty. On the contrary, they will not scruple to assert that their literature is, in a positive sense, religious; nay, perhaps to maintain, that if ever neighbouring nations are to recover that pure and high spirit of devotion, the loss of which, however we may disguise it or pretend to overlook it, can be hidden from no observant mind, it must be by travelling, if not on the same path, at least in the same direction in which the Germans have already begun to travel. We shall add, that the Religion of Germany is a subject not for slight but for deep study, and, if we mistake not, may in some degree reward the deepest.

Here, however, we must close our examination or defence. We have spoken freely, because we felt distinctly, and thought the matter worthy of being stated, and more fully inquired into. Farther than this, we have no quarrel for the Germans: we would have justice done to them, as to all men and all things; but for their literature or character we profess no sectarian or exclusive perference. We think their recent Poetry, indeed, superior to the recent Poetry of any other nation; but taken as a whole, inferior to that of several; inferior not to our own only, but to that of Italy, nay perhaps to that of Spain. Their Philosophy too must still be regarded as uncertain; at best only the beginning of better things. But surely even this is not to be neglected. A little light is precious in great darkness: nor, amid the myriads of Poetasters and *Philosophes*, are Poets and Philosophers so numerous that we should reject such, when they speak to us in the hard, but manly, deep and expressive tones of that old Saxon speech, which is also our mother-tongue.

We confess, the present aspect of spiritual Europe might fill a melancholic observer with doubt and foreboding. It is mournful to see so many noble, tender and high-aspiring minds deserted of that religious light which once guided all such: standing sorrowful on the scene of past convulsions and controversies, as on a scene blackened and burnt-up with fire; mourning in the darkness, because there is desolation, and no home for the soul; or what is worse, pitching tents among the ashes, and kindling weak earthly lamps which we are to take

for stars. This darkness is but transitory obscuration : these ashes are the soil of future herbage and richer harvests. Religion, Poetry, is not dead ; it will never die. Its dwelling and birthplace is in the soul of man, and it is eternal as the being of man. In any point of Space, in any section of Time, let there be a living Man ; and there is an Infinitude above him and beneath him, and an Eternity encompasses him on this hand and on that ; and tones of Sphere-music, and tidings from loftier worlds, will flit round him, if he can but listen, and visit him with holy influences, even in the thickest press of trivialities, or the din of busiest life. Happy the man, happy the nation that can hear these tidings ; that has them written in fit characters, legible to every eye, and the solemn import of them present at all moments to every heart! That there is, in these days, no nation so happy, is too clear ; but that all nations, and ourselves in the van, are, with more or less discernment of its nature, struggling towards this happiness, is the hope and the glory of our time. To us, as to others, success, at a distant or a nearer day, cannot be uncertain. Meanwhile, the first condition of success is, that, in striving honestly ourselves, we honestly acknowledge the striving of our neighbour ; that with a Will unwearied in seeking Truth, we have a Sense open for it, wheresoever and howsoever it may arise.

LIFE AND WRITINGS OF WERNER.[1]

[1828.]

If the charm of fame consisted, as Horace has mistakenly declared, 'in being pointed at with the finger, and having it said, This is he!' few writers of the present age could boast of more fame than Werner. It has been the unhappy fortune of this man to stand for a long period incessantly before the world, in a far stronger light than naturally belonged to him, or could exhibit him to advantage. Twenty years ago he was a man of considerable note, which has ever since been degenerating into notoriety. The mystic dramatist, the sceptical enthusiast, was known and partly esteemed by all students of poetry; Madame de Staël, we recollect, allows him an entire chapter in her *Allemagne*. It was a much coarser curiosity, and in a much wider circle, which the dissipated man, by successive indecorums, occasioned; till at last the convert to Popery, the preaching zealot, came to figure in all newspapers; and some picture of him was required for all heads that would not sit blank and mute in the topic of every coffeehouse and *æsthetic tea*. In dim heads, that is, in the great majority, the picture was, of course, perverted into a strange bugbear, and the original decisively enough condemned; but even the few, who might see him in his true shape, felt too well that nothing loud could be said in his be-

[1] Foreign Review, No. 1.—*Lebens-Abriss Friedrich Ludwig Zacharias Werners. Von dem Herausgeber von Hoffmanns Leben und Nachlass.* (Sketch of the Life of Frederick Ludwig Zacharias Werner. By the Editor of 'Hoffmann's Life and Remains.') Berlin, 1823.

2. *Die Söhne des Thals.* (The Sons of the Valley.) A Dramatic Poem. Part I. *Die Templer auf Cypern.* (The Templars in Cyprus.) Part II. *Die Kreuzesbrüder.* (The Brethren of the Cross.) Berlin, 1801, 1802.

3. *Das Kreuz an der Ostsee.* (The Cross on the Baltic.) A Tragedy. Berlin, 1806.

4. *Martin Luther, oder die Weihe der Kraft.* (Martin Luther, or the Consecration of Strength.) A Tragedy. Berlin, 1807.

5. *Die Mutter der Makkabäer.* (The Mother of the Maccabees.) A Tragedy. Vienna, 1820.

half; that, with so many mournful blemishes, if extenuation could not avail, no complete defence was to be attempted.

At the same time, it is not the history of a mere literary profligate that we have here to do with. Of men whom fine talents cannot teach the humblest prudence, whose high feeling, unexpressed in noble action, must lie smouldering with baser admixtures in their own bosom, till their existence, assaulted from without and from within, becomes a burnt and blackened ruin, to be sighed over by the few, and stared at, or trampled on, by the many, there is unhappily no want in any country; nor can the unnatural union of genius with depravity and degradation have such charms for our readers, that we should go abroad in quest of it, or in any case dwell on it otherwise than with reluctance. Werner is something more than this: a gifted spirit, struggling earnestly amid the new, complex, tumultuous influences of his time and country, but without force to body himself forth from amongst them; a keen adventurous swimmer, aiming towards high and distant landmarks, but too weakly in so rough a sea; for the currents drive him far astray, and he sinks at last in the waves, attaining little for himself, and leaving little, save the memory of his failure, to others. A glance over his history may not be unprofitable; if the man himself can less interest us, the ocean of German, of European Opinion still rolls in wild eddies to and fro; and with its movements and refluxes, indicated in the history of such men, every one of us is concerned.

Our materials for this survey are deficient, not so much in quantity as quality. The 'Life,' now known to be by Hitzig of Berlin, seems a very honest, unpresuming performance; but, on the other hand, it is much too fragmentary and discursive for our wants; the features of the man are nowhere united into a portrait, but left for the reader to unite as he may; a task which, to most readers, will be hard enough: for the Work, short in compass, is more than proportionally short in details of facts; and Werner's history, much as an intimate friend must have known of it, still lies before us, in great part, dark and unintelligible. For what he has done we should doubtless thank our Author; yet it seems a pity, that in this instance he had not done more and better. A singular chance made him, at the same time, companion of both Hoffmann and

Werner, perhaps the two most showy, heterogeneous and misinterpretable writers of his day; nor shall we deny that, in performing a friend's duty to their memory, he has done truth also a service. His *Life of Hoffmann*,[2] pretending to no artfulness of arrangement, is redundant, rather than defective, in minuteness; but there, at least, the means of a correct judgment are brought within our reach, and the work, as usual with Hitzig, bears marks of the utmost fairness; and of an accuracy which we might almost call professional: for the Author, it would seem, is a legal functionary of long standing, and now of respectable rank; and he examines and records, with a certain notarial strictness too rare in compilations of this sort.

So far as Hoffmann is concerned, therefore, we have reason to be satisfied. In regard to Werner, however, we cannot say so much: here we should certainly have wished for more facts, though it had been with fewer consequences drawn from them; were these somewhat chaotic expositions of Werner's character exchanged for simple particulars of his walk and conversation, the result would be much surer, and, especially to foreigners, much more complete and luminous. As it is, from repeated perusals of this biography, we have failed to gather any very clear notion of the man: nor, with perhaps more study of his writings than, on other grounds, they could have merited, does his manner of existence still stand out to us with that distinct cohesion which puts an end to doubt. Our view of him the reader will accept as an approximation, and be content to wonder with us, and charitably pause where we cannot altogether interpret.

Werner was born at Königsberg, in East Prussia, on the 18th of November 1768. His father was Professor of History and Eloquence in the University there; and farther, in virtue of this office, Dramatic Censor; which latter circumstance procured young Werner almost daily opportunity of visiting the theatre, and so gave him, as he says, a greater acquaintance with the mechanism of the stage than even most players are possessed of. A strong taste for the drama it probably enough gave him; but this skill in stage-mechanism may be questioned, for often in his own plays, no such skill, but rather the want of it, is evinced.

[2] See Appendix I. No. 2, § *Hoffmann*.

The Professor and Censor, of whom we hear nothing in blame or praise, died in the fourteenth year of his son, and the boy now fell to the sole charge of his mother; a woman whom he seems to have loved warmly, but whose guardianship could scarcely be the best for him. Werner himself speaks of her in earnest commendation, as of a pure, high-minded and heavily-afflicted being. Hoffmann, however, adds, that she was hypochondriacal, and generally quite delirious, imagining herself to be the Virgin Mary, and her son to be the promised Shiloh! Hoffmann had opportunity enough of knowing; for it is a curious fact that these two singular persons were brought up under the same roof, though, at this time, by reason of their difference of age, Werner being eight years older, they had little or no acquaintance. What a nervous and melancholic parent was, Hoffmann, by another unhappy coincidence, had also full occasion to know: his own mother, parted from her husband, lay helpless and broken-hearted for the last seventeen years of her life, and the first seventeen of his; a source of painful influences, which he used to trace through the whole of his own character; as to the like cause he imputed the primary perversion of Werner's. How far his views on this point were accurate or exaggerated, we have no means of judging.

Of Werner's early years the biographer says little or nothing. We learn only that, about the usual age, he matriculated in the Königsberg University, intending to qualify himself for the business of a lawyer; and with his professional studies united, or attempted to unite, the study of philosophy under Kant. His college-life is characterised by a single, but too expressive word: 'It is said,' observes Hitzig, 'to have been very dissolute.' His progress in metaphysics, as in all branches of learning, might thus be expected to be small; indeed, at no period of his life can he, even in the language of panegyric, be called a man of culture or solid information on any subject. Nevertheless, he contrived, in his twenty-first year, to publish a little volume of 'Poems,' apparently in very tolerable magazine metre; and after some 'roamings' over Germany, having loitered for a while at Berlin, and longer at Dresden, he betook himself to more serious business; applied for admittance and promotion as a Prussian man of law; the employment which young jurists look for in that country being chiefly in the hands of Government; consisting, indeed, of

appointments in the various judicial or administrative Boards by which the Provinces are managed. In 1793, Werner accordingly was made *Kammersecretär* (Exchequer Secretary); a subaltern office, which he held successively in several stations, and last and longest in Warsaw, where Hitzig, a young man following the same profession, first became acquainted with him in 1799.

What the purport or result of Werner's 'roamings' may have been, or how he had demeaned himself in office or out of it, we are nowhere informed; but it is an ominous circumstance that, even at this period, in his thirtieth year, he had divorced *two* wives, the last at least by mutual consent, and was looking out for a third! Hitzig, with whom he seems to have formed a prompt and close intimacy, gives us no full picture of him under any of his aspects: yet we can see that his life, as naturally it might, already wore somewhat of a shattered appearance in his own eyes; that he was broken in character, in spirit, perhaps in bodily constitution; and, contenting himself with the transient gratifications of so gay a city and so tolerable an appointment, had renounced all steady and rational hope either of being happy, or of deserving to be so. Of unsteady and irrational hopes, however, he had still abundance. The fine enthusiasm of his nature, undestroyed by so many external perplexities, nay to which perhaps these very perplexities had given fresh and undue excitement, glowed forth in strange many-coloured brightness from amid the wreck of his fortunes; and led him into wild worlds of speculation, the more vehemently, that the real world of action and duty had become so unmanageable in his hands.

Werner's early publication had sunk, after a brief provincial life, into merited oblivion: in fact, he had then only been a rhymer, and was now, for the first time, beginning to be a poet. We have one of those youthful pieces transcribed in this Volume, and certainly it exhibits a curious contrast with his subsequent writings, both in form and spirit. In form, because, unlike the first-fruits of a genius, it is cold and correct; while his later works, without exception, are fervid, extravagant and full of gross blemishes. In spirit no less, because, treating of his favourite theme, Religion, it treats of it harshly and sceptically; being, indeed, little more than a metrical version of common Utilitarian Free-thinking, as it may be found (with-

out metre) in most taverns and debating-societies. Werner's intermediate secret-history might form a strange chapter in psychology: for now, it is clear, his French scepticism had got overlaid with wondrous theosophic garniture; his mind was full of visions and cloudy glories, and no occupation pleased him better than to controvert, in generous inquiring minds, that very unbelief which he appears to have once entertained in his own. From Hitzig's account of the matter, this seems to have formed the strongest link of *his* intercourse with Werner. The latter was his senior by ten years of time, and by more than ten years of unhappy experience; the grand questions of Immortality, of Fate, Free-will, Foreknowledge absolute, were in continual agitation between them; and Hitzig still remembers with gratitude these earnest warnings against irregularity of life, and so many ardent and not ineffectual endeavours to awaken in the passionate temperament of youth a glow of purer and enlightening fire.

'Some leagues from Warsaw,' says the Biographer, 'enchantingly embosomed in a thick wood, close by the high banks of the Vistula, lies the Camaldulensian Abbey of Bielany, inhabited by a class of monks, who in strictness of discipline yield only to those of La Trappe. To this cloistral solitude Werner was wont to repair with his friend, every fine Saturday of the summer of 1800, so soon as their occupations in the city were over. In defect of any formal inn, the two used to bivouac in the forest, or at best to sleep under a temporary tent. The Sunday was then spent in the open air; in roving about the woods; sailing on the river, and the like; till late night recalled them to the city. On such occasions, the younger of the party had ample room to unfold his whole heart before his more mature and settled companion; to advance his doubts and objections against many theories, which Werner was already cherishing; and so, by exciting him with contradiction, to cause him to make them clearer to himself.'

Week after week, these discussions were carefully resumed from the point where they had been left: indeed, to Werner, it would seem, this controversy had unusual attractions; for he was now busy composing a Poem, intended principally to convince the world of those very truths which he was striving to impress on his friend; and to which the world, as might be expected, was likely to give a similar reception. The character, or at least the way of thought, attributed to Robert d'Heredon, the Scottish Templar, in the *Sons of the Valley*, was borrowed, it appears, as if by regular instalments, from these conferences

with Hitzig; the result of the one Sunday being duly entered in dramatic form during the week; then audited on the Sunday following; and so forming the text for farther disquisition. 'Blissful days,' adds Hitzig, 'pure and innocent, which doubtless Werner also ever held in pleased remembrance!'

The *Söhne des Thals*, composed in this rather questionable fashion, was in due time forthcoming; the First Part in 1801, the Second about a year afterwards. It is a drama, or rather two dramas, unrivalled at least in one particular, in length; each Part being a play of six acts, and the whole amounting to somewhat more than 800 small octavo pages! To attempt any analysis of such a work would but fatigue our readers to little purpose: it is, as might be anticipated, of a most loose and formless structure; expanding on all sides into vague boundlessness, and, on the whole, resembling not so much a poem as the rude materials of one. The subject is the destruction of the Templar Order; an event which has been dramatised more than once, but on which, notwithstanding, Werner, we suppose, may boast of being entirely original. The fate of Jacques Molay and his brethren acts here but like a little leaven: and lucky were we, could it leaven the lump; but it lies buried under such a mass of Mystical theology, Masonic mummery, Cabalistic tradition and Rosicrucian philosophy, as no power could work into dramatic union. The incidents are few, and of little interest; interrupted continually by flaring shows and long-winded speculations; for Werner's besetting sin, that of loquacity, is here in decided action; and so we wander, in aimless windings, through scene after scene of gorgeousness or gloom; till at last the whole rises before us like a wild phantasmagoria; cloud heaped on cloud, painted indeed here and there with prismatic hues, but representing nothing, or at least not the subject, but the author.

In this last point of view, however, as a picture of himself, independently of other considerations, this play of Werner's may still have a certain value for us. The strange chaotic nature of the man is displayed in it: his scepticism and theosophy; his audacity, yet intrinsic weakness of character; his baffled longings, but still ardent endeavours after Truth and Good; his search for them in far journeyings, not on the beaten highways, but through the pathless infinitudes of Thought. To call it a work of art would be a misapplication of names: it is

little more than a rhapsodic effusion; the outpouring of a passionate and mystic soul, only half-knowing what it utters, and not ruling its own movements, but ruled by them. It is fair to add, that such also, in a great measure, was Werner's own view of the matter: most likely the utterance of these things gave him such relief, that, crude as they were, he could not suppress them. For it ought to be remembered, that in this performance one condition, at least, of genuine inspiration is not wanting: Werner evidently thinks that in these his ultramundane excursions he has found truth; he has something positive to set forth, and he feels himself as if bound on a high and holy mission in preaching it to his fellow-men.

To explain with any minuteness the articles of Werner's creed, as it was now fashioned and is here exhibited, would be a task perhaps too hard for us, and, at all events, unprofitable in proportion to its difficulty. We have found some separable passages, in which, under dark symbolical figures, he has himself shadowed forth a vague likeness of it: these we shall now submit to the reader, with such expositions as we gather from the context, or as German readers, from the usual tone of speculation in that country, are naturally enabled to supply. This may, at the same time, convey as fair a notion of the work itself, with its tawdry splendours, and tumid grandiloquence, and mere playhouse thunder and lightning, as by any other plan our limits would admit.

Let the reader fancy himself in the island of Cyprus, where the Order of the Templars still subsists, though the heads of it are already summoned before the French King and Pope Clement; which summons they are now, not without dreary enough forebodings, preparing to obey. The purport of this First Part, so far as it has any dramatic purport, is to paint the situation, outward and inward, of that once pious and heroic, and still magnificent and powerful body. It is entitled *The Templars in Cyprus;* but why it should also be called *The Sons of the Valley* does not so well appear; for the Brotherhood of the *Valley* has yet scarcely come into activity, and only hovers before us in glimpses, of so enigmatic a sort, that we know not fully so much as whether these its *Sons* are of flesh and blood like ourselves, or of some spiritual nature, or of something intermediate and altogether nondescript. For the rest, it is a series of spectacles and dissertations; the action

cannot so much be said to advance as to revolve. On this occasion the Templars are admitting two new members; the acolytes have already passed their preliminary trials; this is the chief and final one:

Act V. Scene I.

Midnight. Interior of the Temple Church. Backwards, a deep perspective of Altars and Gothic Pillars. On the right-hand side of the foreground, a little Chapel; and in this an Altar with the figure of St. Sebastian. The scene is lighted very dimly by a single Lamp which hangs before the Altar.

* * * * *

Adalbert [*dressed in white, without mantle or doublet; groping his way in the dark*].

Was it not at the Altar of Sebastian
That I was bidden wait for the Unknown?
Here should it be; but darkness with her veil
Inwraps the figures. [*Advancing to the Altar.*
Here is the fifth pillar!
Yes, this is he, the Sainted.—How the glimmer
Of that faint lamp falls on his fading eye!—
Ah, it is not the spears o' th' Saracens,
It is the pangs of hopeless love that burning
Transfix thy heart, poor Comrade!—O my Agnes,
May not thy spirit, in this earnest hour,
Be looking on? Art hovering in that moonbeam
Which struggles through the painted window, and dies
Amid the cloister's gloom? Or linger'st thou
Behind these pillars, which, ominous and black,
Look down on me, like horrors of the Past
Upon the Present; and hidest thy gentle form,
Lest with thy paleness thou too much affright me?
Hide not thyself, pale shadow of my Agnes,
Thou affrightest not thy lover.—Hush!—
Hark! Was not there a rustling?—Father! You?

Philip [*rushing in with wild looks*].

Yes, Adalbert!—But time is precious!—Come,
My son, my one sole Adalbert, come with me!

Adalbert. What would you, father, in this solemn hour?

Philip. This hour, or never! [*Leading Adalbert to the Altar.*
Hither!—Know'st thou *him*?

Adalbert. 'Tis Saint Sebastian.

Philip. Because he would not
Renounce his faith, a tyrant had him murdered. [*Points to his head.*
These furrows, too, the rage of tyrants ploughed
In thy old father's face. My son, my first-born child,

In this great hour I do conjure thee! Wilt thou,
Wilt thou obey me?

ADALBERT. Be it just, I will!

PHILIP. Then swear, in this great hour, in this dread presence,
Here by thy father's head made early gray,
By the remembrance of thy mother's agony,
And by the ravished blossom of thy Agnes,
Against the Tyranny which sacrificed us,
Inexpiable, bloody, everlasting hate!

ADALBERT. Ha! *This* the All-avenger spoke through thee!—
Yes! Bloody shall my Agnes' death-torch burn
In Philip's heart; I swear it!

PHILIP [*with increasing vehemence*]. And if thou break
This oath, and if thou reconcile thee to him,
Or let his golden chains, his gifts, his prayers,
His dying moan itself avert thy dagger
When th' hour of vengeance comes,—shall this gray head,
Thy mother's wail, the last sigh of thy Agnes,
Accuse thee at the bar of the Eternal!

ADALBERT. So be it, if I break my oath!

PHILIP. Then man thee!—
[*Looking up, then shrinking together, as with dazzled eyes.*
Ha! was not that his lightning?—Fare thee well!
I hear the footstep of the Dreaded!—Firm—
Remember me, remember this stern midnight! [*Retires hastily.*

ADALBERT [*alone*]. Yes, Grayhead, whom the beckoning of the Lord
Sent hither to awake me out of craven sleep,
I will remember thee and this stern midnight,
And my Agnes' spirit shall have vengeance!—

Enter an Armed Man. He is mailed from head to foot in black harness; his visor is closed.

ARMED MAN. Pray! [*Adalbert kneels.*
Bare thyself!— [*He strips him to the girdle and raises him.*
Look on the ground, and follow!
[*He leads him into the background to a trap-door, on the right. He descends first himself; and when Adalbert has followed him, it closes.*

SCENE II.

Cemetery of the Templars, under the Church. The scene is lighted only by a Lamp which hangs down from the vault. Around are Tombstones of deceased Knights, marked with Crosses and sculptured Bones. In the background, two colossal Skeletons holding between them a large white Book, marked with a red Cross; from the under end of the Book

hangs a long black curtain. The Book, of which only the cover is visible, has an inscription in black ciphers. The Skeleton on the right holds in its right hand a naked drawn Sword; that on the left holds in its left hand a Palm turned downwards. On the right side of the foreground stands a black Coffin open; on the left, a similar one with the body of a Templar in the full dress of his Order; on both Coffins are inscriptions in white ciphers. On each side, nearer the background, are seen the lowest steps of the stairs which lead up into the Temple Church above the vault.

ARMED MAN [*not yet visible; above on the right-hand stairs*].
Dreaded! Is the grave laid open?
CONCEALED VOICES. Yea!
ARMED MAN [*who after a pause shows himself on the stairs*].
Shall he behold the Tombs o' th' fathers?
CONCEALED VOICES. Yea!
[*Armed Man with drawn sword leads Adalbert carefully down the steps on the right hand.*
ARMED MAN [*to Adalbert*].
Look down! 'Tis on thy life! [*Leads him to the open Coffin.*
What seest thou?
ADALBERT. An open empty Coffin.
ARMED MAN. 'Tis the house
Where thou one day shalt dwell.—Canst read th' inscription?
ADALBERT. No.
ARMED MAN. Hear it, then: 'Thy wages, Sin, is Death.'
[*Leads him to the opposite Coffin where the Body is lying.*
Look down! 'Tis on thy life!—What seest thou? [*Shows the Coffin.*
ADALBERT. A Coffin with a Corpse.
ARMED MAN. He is thy Brother;
One day thou art as he.—Canst read th' inscription?
ADALBERT. No.
ARMED MAN. Hear: 'Corruption is the name of Life.'
Now look around; go forward,—move, and act!—
[*He pushes him towards the background of the stage.*
ADALBERT [*observing the Book*].
Ha! Here the Book of Ordination!—Seems [*Approaching.*
As if th' inscription on it might be read. [*He reads it.*

'Knock four times on the ground,
Thou shalt behold thy loved one.'

O Heavens! And may I see thee, sainted Agnes?
My bosom yearns for thee!— [*Hastening close to the Book.*
[*With the following words, he stamps four times on the ground.*
One,—Two,—Three,—Four!—

[*The Curtain hanging from the Book rolls rapidly up, and covers it. A colossal Devil's-head appears between the two Skeletons; its form is*

horrible; it is gilt; has a huge golden Crown, a Heart of the same on its Brow; rolling flaming Eyes; Serpents instead of Hair; golden Chains round its neck, which is visible to the breast; and a golden Cross, yet not a Crucifix, which rises over its right shoulder, as if crushing it down. The whole Bust rests on four gilt Dragon's-feet. At sight of it Adalbert starts back in horror, and exclaims:

Defend us!

ARMED MAN. Dreaded! may he hear it?

CONCEALED VOICES. Yea!

ARMED MAN [*touches the Curtain with his Sword; it rolls down over the Devil's-head, concealing it again; and above, as before, appears the Book, but now opened, with white colossal leaves and red characters. The Armed Man, pointing constantly to the Book with his sword, and therewith turning the leaves, addresses Adalbert, who stands on the other side of the Book, and nearer the foreground*].

List to the Story of the Fallen Master.

[*He reads the following from the Book; yet not standing before it, but on one side, at some paces distance, and whilst he reads, turning the leaves with his Sword.*

'So now when the foundation-stone was laid,
The Lord called forth the Master, Baffometus,
And said to him: Go and complete my Temple!
But in his heart the Master thought: What boots it
Building thee a temple? and took the stones,
And built himself a dwelling, and what stones
Were left he gave for filthy gold and silver.
Now after forty moons the Lord returned,
And spake: Where is my Temple, Baffometus?
The Master said: I had to build myself
A dwelling; grant me other forty weeks.
And after forty weeks, the Lord returns,
And asks: Where is my Temple, Baffometus?
He said: There were no stones (but he had sold them
For filthy gold); so wait yet forty days.
In forty days thereafter came the Lord,
And cried: Where is my Temple, Baffometus?
Then like a millstone fell it on his soul
How he for lucre had betrayed his Lord;
But yet to other sin the Fiend did tempt him,
And he answered, saying: Give me forty hours!
And when the forty hours were gone, the Lord
Came down in wrath: My Temple, Baffometus?
Then fell he quaking on his face, and cried
For mercy; but the Lord was wroth, and said:

Since thou hast cozened me with empty lies,
And those the stones I lent thee for my Temple
Hast sold them for a purse of filthy gold,
Lo, I will cast thee forth, and with the Mammon
Will chastise thee, until a Saviour rise
Of thy own seed, who shall redeem thy trespass.
Then did the Lord lift up the purse of gold;
And shook the gold into a melting-pot,
And set the melting-pot upon the Sun,
So that the metal fused into a fluid mass.
And then he dipt a finger in the same,
And straightway touching Baffometus,
Anoints him on the chin and brow and cheeks.
Then was the face of Baffometus changed:
His eyeballs rolled like fire-flames,
His nose became a crooked vulture's bill,
The tongue hung bloody from his throat; the flesh
Went from his hollow cheeks; and of his hair
Grew snakes, and of the snakes grew Devil's-horns.
Again the Lord put forth his finger with the gold,
And pressed it upon Baffometus' heart;
Whereby the heart did bleed and wither up,
And all his members bled and withered up,
And fell away, the one and then the other.
At last his back itself sunk into ashes;
The head alone continued gilt and living;
And instead of back, grew dragon's-talons,
Which destroyed all life from off the Earth.
Then from the ground the Lord took up the heart,
Which, as he touched it, also grew of gold,
And placed it on the brow of Baffometus;
And of the other metal in the pot
He made for him a burning crown of gold,
And crushed it on his serpent-hair, so that
Even to the bone and brain the circlet scorched him.
And round the neck he twisted golden chains,
Which strangled him and pressed his breath together.
What in the pot remained he poured upon the ground,
Athwart, along, and there it formed a cross;
The which he lifted and laid upon his neck,
And bent him that he could not raise his head.
Two Deaths moreover he appointed warders
To guard him: Death of Life, and Death of Hope.
The Sword of the first he sees not, but it smites him,
The other's Palm he sees, but it escapes him.
So languishes the outcast Baffometus
Four thousand years and four-and-forty moons,

Till once a Saviour rise from his own seed,
Redeem his trespass and deliver him.' [*To Adalbert.*
This is the Story of the Fallen Master.

[*With his Sword he touches the Curtain, which now as before rolls up over the Book; so that the Head under it again becomes visible, in its former shape.*

ADALBERT [*looking at the Head*].
Hah, what a hideous shape!

HEAD [*with a hollow voice*]. Deliver me!—

ARMED MAN. Dreaded! shall the work begin?

CONCEALED VOICES. Yea!

ARMED MAN [*to Adalbert*]. Take the neckband away! [*Pointing to the Head.*

ADALBERT. I dare not!

HEAD [*with a still more piteous tone*]. O, deliver me!

ADALBERT [*taking off the chains*]. Poor fallen one!

ARMED MAN. Now lift the crown from 's head!

ADALBERT. It seems so heavy!

ARMED MAN. Touch it, it grows light.

[*Adalbert taking off the Crown, and casting it, as he did the chains, on the ground.*

ARMED MAN. Now take the golden heart from off his brow!

ADALBERT. It seems to burn!

ARMED MAN. Thou errest: ice is warmer.

ADALBERT [*taking the Heart from the Brow*].
Hah! shivering frost!

ARMED MAN. Take from his back the Cross,
And throw it from thee!—

ADALBERT. How! The Saviour's token?

HEAD. Deliver, O, deliver me!

ARMED MAN. This Cross
Is not thy Master's, not that bloody one:
Its counterfeit is this: throw 't from thee!

ADALBERT [*taking it from the Bust, and laying it softly on the ground*].
The Cross of the Good Lord that died for me?

ARMED MAN. *Thou shalt no more believe in one that died;*
Thou shalt henceforth believe in one that liveth
And never dies!—Obey, and question not,—
Step over it!

ADALBERT. Take pity on me!

ARMED MAN [*threatening him with his Sword*]. Step!

ADALBERT. I do 't with shuddering—

[*Steps over, and then looks up to the Head, which raises itself as freed from a load.*

How the figure rises
And looks in gladness!

ARMED MAN. Him whom thou hast served
Till now, deny!
ADALBERT [*horrorstruck*]. Deny the Lord my God?
ARMED MAN. Thy God 'tis not: the Idol of this World!
Deny him, or—
[*Pressing on him with the Sword in a threatening posture.*
—thou diest!
ADALBERT. I deny!
ARMED MAN [*pointing to the Head with his Sword*].
Go to the Fallen!—Kiss his lips!—

—And so on through many other sulphurous pages! How much of this mummery is copied from the actual practice of the Templars we know not with certainty; nor what precisely either they or Werner intended, by this marvellous 'Story of the Fallen Master,' to shadow forth. At first view, one might take it for an allegory, couched in Masonic language,—and truly no flattering allegory,—of the Catholic Church; and this trampling on the Cross, which is said to have been actually enjoined on every Templar at his initiation, to be a type of his secret behest to undermine that Institution, and redeem the spirit of Religion from the state of thraldom and distortion under which it was there held. It is known at least, and was well known to Werner, that the heads of the Templars entertained views, both on religion and politics, which they did not think meet for communicating to their age, and only imparted by degrees, and under mysterious adumbrations, to the wiser of their own Order. They had even publicly resisted, and succeeded in thwarting, some iniquitous measures of Philippe Auguste, the French King, in regard to his coinage; and this, while it secured them the love of the people, was one great cause, perhaps second only to their wealth, of the hatred which that sovereign bore them, and of the savage doom which he at last executed on the whole body.

But on these secret principles of theirs, as on Werner's manner of conceiving them, we are only enabled to guess; for Werner, too, has an esoteric doctrine, which he does not promulgate, except in dark Sibylline enigmas, to the uninitiated. As we are here seeking chiefly for his religious creed, which forms, in truth, with its changes, the main thread whereby his wayward, desultory existence attains any unity or even coherence in our thoughts, we may quote another passage from the same First Part of this rhapsody; which, at the same time,

will afford us a glimpse of his favourite hero, Robert d'Heredon, lately the darling of the Templars, but now, for some momentary infraction of their rules, cast into prison, and expecting death, or, at best, exclusion from the Order. Gottfried is another Templar, in all points the reverse of Robert.

Act IV. Scene I.

Prison; at the wall a Table. Robert, without sword, cap, or mantle, sits downcast on one side of it: Gottfried, who keeps watch by him, sitting at the other.

Gottfried. But how couldst thou so far forget thyself?
Thou wert our pride, the Master's friend and favourite!
Robert. I did it, thou perceiv'st!
Gottfried. How could a word
Of the old surly Hugo so provoke thee?
Robert. Ask not—Man's being is a spider-web:
The passionate flash o' th' soul—comes not of him;
It is the breath of that dark Genius,
Which whirls invisible along the threads:
A servant of eternal Destiny,
It purifies them from the vulgar dust,
Which earthward strives to press the net:
But Fate gives sign; the breath becomes a whirlwind,
And in a moment rends to shreds the thing
We thought was woven for Eternity.
Gottfried. Yet each man shapes his Destiny himself.
Robert. Small soul! dost thou too know it? Has the story
Of Force and free Volition, that, defying
The corporal Atoms and Annihilation,
Methodic guides the car of Destiny,
Come down to *thee?* Dream'st thou, poor Nothingness,
That thou, and like of thee, and ten times better
Than thou or I, can lead the wheel of Fate
One hair's-breadth from its everlasting track?
I too have had such dreams: but fearfully
Have I been shook from sleep; and they are fled!—
Look at our Order: has it spared its thousands
Of noblest lives, the victims of its Purpose;
And has it gained this Purpose; can it gain it?
Look at our noble Molay's silvered hair:
The fruit of watchful nights and stormful days,
And of the broken yet still burning heart!
That mighty heart!—Through sixty battling years,
'T has beat in pain for nothing: his creation

Remains the vision of his own great soul;
It dies with him; and one day shall the pilgrim
Ask where his dust is lying, and not learn!
GOTTFRIED [*yawning*].
But then the Christian has the joy of Heaven
For recompense: in his flesh he shall see God.
ROBERT. In his flesh?—Now fair befall the journey!
Wilt stow it in behind, by way of luggage,
When the Angel comes to coach thee into Glory?
Mind also that the memory of those fair hours
When dinner smoked before thee, or thou usedst
To dress thy nag, or scour thy rusty harness,
And suchlike noble business be not left behind!—
Ha! self-deceiving bipeds, is it not enough
The carcass should at every step oppress,
Imprison you; that toothache, headache,
Gout,—who knows what all,—at every moment,
Degrades the god of Earth into a beast;
But you would take this villanous mingle,
The coarser dross of all the elements,
Which, by the Light-beam from on high that visits
And dwells in it, but baser shows its baseness,—
Take this, and all the freaks which, bubble-like,
Spring forth o' th' blood, and which by such fair names
You call,—along with you into your Heaven?—
Well, be it so! much good may 't—
[*As his eye, by chance, lights on Gottfried, who meanwhile has fallen asleep.*
—Sound already?
There is a race for whom all serves as—pillow,
Even rattling chains are but a lullaby.

This Robert d'Heredon, whose preaching has here such a narcotic virtue, is destined ultimately for a higher office than to rattle his chains by way of lullaby. He is ejected from the Order; not, however, with disgrace and in anger, but in sad feeling of necessity, and with tears and blessings from his brethren; and the messenger of the *Valley*, a strange, ambiguous, little, sylph-like maiden, gives him obscure encouragement, before his departure, to possess his soul in patience; seeing, if he can learn the grand secret of Renunciation, his course is not ended, but only opening on a fairer scene. Robert knows not well what to make of this; but sails for his native Hebrides, in darkness and contrition, as one who can do no other.

In the end of the Second Part, which is represented as

divided from the First by an interval of seven years, Robert is again summoned forth; and the whole surprising secret of his mission, and of the *Valley* which appoints it for him, is disclosed. This *Friedenthal* (Valley of Peace), it now appears, is an immense secret association, which has its chief seat somewhere about the roots of Mount Carmel, if we mistake not; but, comprehending in its ramifications the best heads and hearts of every country, extends over the whole civilised world; and has, in particular, a strong body of adherents in Paris, and indeed a subterraneous but seemingly very commodious suite of rooms under the Carmelite Monastery of that city. Here sit in solemn conclave the heads of the Establishment; directing from their lodge, in deepest concealment, the principal movements of the kingdom: for William of Paris, archbishop of Sens, being of their number, the king and his other ministers, fancying within themselves the utmost freedom of action, are nothing more than puppets in the hands of this all-powerful Brotherhood, which watches, like a sort of Fate, over the interests of mankind, and, by mysterious agencies, forwards, we suppose, 'the cause of civil and religious liberty all over the world.' It is they that have doomed the Templars; and, without malice or pity, are sending their leaders to the dungeon and the stake. That knightly Order, once a favourite minister of good, has now degenerated from its purity, and come to mistake its purpose, having taken up politics and a sort of radical reform; and so must now be broken and reshaped, like a worn implement, which can no longer do its appointed work.

Such a magnificent 'Society for the Suppression of Vice' may well be supposed to walk by the most philosophical principles. These *Friedenthalers*, in fact, profess to be a sort of Invisible Church; preserving in vestal purity the sacred fire of religion, which burns with more or less fuliginous admixture in the worship of every people, but only with its clear sidereal lustre in the recesses of the *Valley*. They are Bramins on the Ganges, Bonzes on the Hoangho, Monks on the Seine. They addict themselves to contemplation and the subtlest study; have penetrated far into the mysteries of spiritual and physical nature; they command the deep-hidden virtues of plant and mineral; and their sages can discriminate the eye of the mind from its sensual instruments, and behold, without type or ma-

terial embodiment, the essence of Being. Their activity is all-comprehending and unerringly calculated : they rule over the world by the authority of wisdom over ignorance.

In the Fifth Act of the Second Part, we are at length, after many a hint and significant note of preparation, introduced to the privacies of this philosophical *Santa Hermandad.* A strange Delphic cave this of theirs, under the very pavements of Paris! There are brazen folding-doors, and concealed voices, and sphinxes, and naphtha-lamps, and all manner of wondrous furniture. It seems, moreover, to be a sort of gala evening with them ; for the 'Old Man of Carmel, in eremite garb, with a 'long beard reaching to his girdle,' is for a moment discovered 'reading in a deep monotonous voice.' The 'Strong Ones,' meanwhile, are out in quest of Robert d'Heredon ; who, by cunning practices, has been enticed from his Hebridean solitude, in the hope of saving Molay, and is even now to be initiated, and equipped for his task. After a due allowance of pompous ceremonial, Robert is at last ushered in, or rather dragged in ; for it appears that he has made a stout debate, not submitting to the customary form of being *ducked,*—an essential preliminary, it would seem,—till compelled by the direst necessity. He is in a truly Highland anger, as is natural: but by various manipulations and solacements, he is reduced to reason again ; finding, indeed, the fruitlessness of anything else ; for when lance and sword and free space are given him, and he makes a thrust at Adam of Valincourt, the master of the ceremonies, it is to no purpose : the old man has a torpedo quality in him, which benumbs the stoutest arm ; and no death issues from the baffled sword-point, but only a small spark of electric fire. With his Scottish prudence, Robert, under these circumstances, cannot but perceive that quietness is best. The people hand him, in succession, the 'Cup of Strength,' the 'Cup of Beauty,' and the 'Cup of Wisdom ;' liquors brewed, if we may judge from their effects, with the highest stretch of Rosicrucian art ; and which must have gone far to disgust Robert d'Heredon with his natural *usquebaugh,* however excellent, had that fierce drink been in use then. He rages in a fine frenzy ; dies away in raptures ; and then, at last, 'considers what he wanted and what he wants.' Now is the time for Adam of Valincourt to strike-in with an interminable exposition of the 'objects of the society.' To not unwilling but

still cautious ears he unbosoms himself, in mystic wise, with extreme copiousness; turning aside objections like a veteran disputant, and leading his apt and courageous pupil, by signs and wonders, as well as by logic, deeper and deeper into the secrets of theosophic and thaumaturgic science. A little glimpse of this our readers may share with us; though we fear the allegory will seem to most of them but a hollow nut. Nevertheless, it is an allegory—of its sort; and we can profess to have translated with entire fidelity:

* * * * *

ADAM. Thy riddle by a second will be solved.
[*He leads him to the Sphinx.*
Behold this Sphinx! Half-beast, half-angel, both
Combined in one, it is an emblem to thee
Of th' ancient Mother, Nature, herself a riddle,
And only by a deeper to be master'd.
Eternal Clearness in th' eternal Ferment:
This is the riddle of Existence:—read it,—
Propose that other to her, and she serves thee!

[*The door on the right hand opens, and, in the space behind it, appears, as before, the Old Man of Carmel, sitting at a Table, and reading in a large Volume. Three deep strokes of a Bell are heard.*

OLD MAN OF CARMEL [*reading with a loud but still monotonous voice*]. 'And when the Lord saw Phosphoros'—

ROBERT [*interrupting him*]. Ha! Again
A story as of Baffometus?

ADAM. Not so.
That tale of theirs was but some poor distortion
Of th' outmost image of our Sanctuary.—
Keep silence here; and see thou interrupt not,
By too bold cavilling, this mystery.

OLD MAN [*reading*].
'And when the Lord saw Phosphoros his pride,
Being wroth thereat, he cast him forth,
And shut him in a prison called LIFE;
And gave him for a Garment earth and water,
And bound him straitly in four Azure Chains,
And pour'd for him the bitter Cup of Fire.
The Lord moreover spake: Because thou hast forgotten
My will, I yield thee to the Element,
And thou shalt be his slave, and have no longer
Remembrance of thy Birthplace or my Name.
And sithence thou hast sinn'd against me by
Thy prideful Thought of being One and Somewhat,

I leave with thee that Thought to be thy whip,
And this thy weakness for a Bit and Bridle;
Till once a Saviour from the Waters rise,
Who shall again baptise thee in my bosom,
That so thou mayst be Nought and All.
'And when the Lord had spoken, he drew back
As in a mighty rushing; and the Element
Rose up round Phosphoros, and tower'd itself
Aloft to Heav'n; and he lay stunn'd beneath it.
'But when his first-born Sister saw his pain,
Her heart was full of sorrow, and she turn'd her
To the Lord; and with veil'd face, thus spake Mylitta:[3]
Pity my Brother, and let me console him!
'Then did the Lord in pity rend asunder
A little chink in Phosphoros his dungeon,
That so he might behold his Sister's face;
And when she silent peep'd into his Prison,
She left with him a Mirror for his solace;
And when he look'd therein, his earthly Garment
Pressed him less; and, like the gleam of morning,
Some faint remembrance of his Birthplace dawn'd.
'But yet the Azure Chains she could not break,
The bitter Cup of Fire not take from him.
Therefore she pray'd to Mythras, to her Father,
To save his youngest-born; and Mythras went
Up to the footstool of the Lord, and said:
Take pity on my Son!—Then said the Lord:
Have I not sent Mylitta that he may
Behold his Birthplace?—Wherefore Mythras answer'd:
What profits it? The Chains she cannot break,
The bitter Cup of Fire not take from him.
So will I, said the Lord, the Salt be given him,
That so the bitter Cup of Fire be softened;
But yet the Azure Chains must lie on him
Till once a Saviour rise from out the Waters.—
And when the Salt was laid on Phosphor's tongue,
The Fire's piercing ceased; but th' Element
Congeal'd the Salt to Ice, and Phosphoros
Lay there benumb'd, and had not power to move.
But Isis saw him, and thus spake the Mother:
'Thou who art Father, Strength and Word and Light!
Shall he my last-born grandchild lie forever
In pain, the down-pressed thrall of his rude Brother?
Then had the Lord compassion, and he sent him
The Herald of the Saviour from the Waters;

[3] *Mylitta* in the old Persian mysteries was the name of the Moon; *Mythras* that of the Sun.

The Cup of Fluidness, and in the cup
The drops of Sadness and the drops of Longing:
And then the Ice was thawed, the Fire grew cool,
And Phosphoros again had room to breathe.
But yet the earthy Garment cumber'd him,
The Azure Chains still gall'd, and the Remembrance
Of the Name, the Lord's, which he had lost, was wanting.
'Then the Mother's heart was mov'd with pity,
She beckoned the Son to her, and said:
Thou who art more than I, and yet my nursling,
Put on this Robe of Earth, and show thyself
To fallen Phosphoros bound in the dungeon,
And open him that dungeon's narrow cover.
Then said the Word: It shall be so! and sent
His messenger DISEASE; she broke the roof
Of Phosphor's Prison, so that once again
The Fount of Light he saw: the Element
Was dazzled blind; but Phosphor knew his Father.
And when the Word, in Earth, came to the Prison,
The Element address'd him as his like;
But Phosphoros look'd up to him, and said:
Thou art sent hither to redeem from Sin,
Yet thou art not the Saviour from the Waters.—
Then spake the Word: The Saviour from the Waters
I surely am not; yet when thou hast drunk
The Cup of Fluidness, I will redeem thee.
Then Phosphor drank the Cup of Fluidness,
Of Longing, and of Sadness; and his Garment
Did drop sweet drops; wherewith the Messenger
Of the Word wash'd all his Garment, till its folds
And stiffness vanish'd, and it 'gan grow light.
And when the Prison LIFE she touch'd, straightway
It waxed thin and lucid like to crystal.
But yet the Azure Chains she could not break.—
Then did the Word vouchsafe him the Cup of Faith;
And having drunk it, Phosphoros look'd up,
And saw the Saviour standing in the Waters.
Both hands the Captive stretch'd to grasp that Saviour
But he fled.
'So Phosphoros was griev'd in heart:
But yet the Word spake comfort, giving him
The Pillow *Patience*, there to lay his head.
And having rested, he rais'd his head, and said:
Wilt thou redeem me from the Prison too?
Then said the Word: Wait yet in peace seven moons,
It may be nine, until thy hour shall come.
And Phosphor answer'd: Lord, thy will be done!

'Which when the mother Isis saw, it griev'd her;
She called the Rainbow up, and said to him:
Go thou and tell the Word that he forgive
The Captive these seven moons! And Rainbow flew
Where he was sent; and as he shook his wings
There dropt from them the *Oil of Purity:*
And this the Word did gather in a Cup,
And cleans'd with it the Sinner's head and bosom.
Then passing forth into his Father's Garden,
He breath'd upon the ground, and there arose
A flow'ret out of it, like milk and rose-bloom;
Which having wetted with the dew of Rapture,
He crown'd therewith the Captive's brow; then grasped him
With his right hand, the Rainbow with the left;
Mylitta likewise with her Mirror came,
And Phosphoros looked into it, and saw
Writ on the Azure of Infinity
The long-forgotten NAME, and the REMEMBRANCE
Of HIS BIRTHPLACE, gleaming as in light of gold.
'Then fell there as if scales from Phosphor's eyes;
He left the Thought of being One and Somewhat,
His nature melted in the mighty All;
Like sighings from above came balmy healing,
So that his heart for very bliss was bursting.
For Chains and Garment cumber'd him no more:
The Garment he had changed to royal purple,
And of his Chains were fashion'd glancing jewels.
'True, still the Saviour from the Waters tarried;
Yet came the Spirit over him; the Lord
Turn'd towards him a gracious countenance,
And Isis held him in her mother-arms.
'This is the last of the Evangels.'

[*The door closes, and again conceals the Old Man of Carmel.*

The purport of this enigma Robert confesses that he does not 'wholly understand;' an admission in which, we suspect, most of our readers, and the Old Man of Carmel himself, were he candid, might be inclined to agree with him. Sometimes, in the deeper consideration which translators are bound to bestow on such extravagances, we have fancied we could discern in this apologue some glimmerings of meaning, scattered here and there like weak lamps in the darkness; not enough to interpret the riddle, but to show that by possibility it might have an interpretation,—was a typical vision, with a certain degree of significance in the wild mind of the poet, not an inane fever-

dream. Might not Phosphoros, for example, indicate generally the spiritual essence of man, and this story be an emblem of his history? He longs to be 'One and Somewhat;' that is, he labours under the very common complaint of *egoism;* cannot, in the grandeur of Beauty and Virtue, forget his own so beautiful and virtuous *Self;* but, amid the glories of the majestic All, is still haunted and blinded by some shadow of his own little *Me*. For this reason he is punished; imprisoned in the 'Element' (of a material body), and has the 'four Azure Chains' (the four principles of matter) bound round him; so that he can neither think nor act, except in a foreign medium, and under conditions that encumber and confuse him. The 'Cup of Fire' is given him; perhaps, the rude, barbarous passion and cruelty natural to all uncultivated tribes? But, at length, he beholds the 'Moon;' begins to have some sight and love of material Nature; and, looking into her 'Mirror,' forms to himself, under gross emblems, a theogony and sort of mythologic poetry; in which, if he still cannot behold the 'Name,' and has forgotten his own 'Birthplace,' both of which are blotted out and hidden by the 'Element,' he finds some spiritual solace, and breathes more freely. Still, however, the 'Cup of Fire' tortures him; till the 'Salt' (intellectual culture?) is vouchsafed; which, indeed, calms the raging of that furious bloodthirstiness and warlike strife, but leaves him, as mere culture of the understanding may be supposed to do, frozen into irreligion and moral inactivity, and farther from the 'Name' and his 'Own Original' than ever. Then, is the 'Cup of Fluidness' a more merciful disposition? and intended, with 'the Drops of Sadness and the Drops of Longing,' to shadow forth that woe-struck, desolate, yet softer and devouter state in which mankind displayed itself at the coming of the 'Word,' at the first promulgation of the Christian religion? Is the 'Rainbow' the modern poetry of Europe, the Chivalry, the new form of Stoicism, the whole *romantic* feeling of these later days? But who or what the '*Heiland aus den Wassern* (Saviour from the Waters)' may be, we need not hide our entire ignorance; this being apparently a secret of the *Valley*, which Robert d'Heredon, and Werner, and men of like gifts, are in due time to show the world, but unhappily have not yet succeeded in bringing to light. Perhaps, indeed, our whole interpretation may be thought little better than lost labour; a reading of what was only scrawled

and flourished, not written ; a shaping of gay castles and metallic palaces from the sunset clouds, which, though mountain-like, and purple and golden of hue, and towered together as if by Cyclopean arms, are but dyed vapour.

Adam of Valincourt continues his exposition in the most liberal way ; but, through many pages of metrical lecturing, he does little to satisfy us. What was more to his purpose, he partly succeeds in satisfying Robert d'Heredon ; who, after due preparation,—Molay being burnt like a martyr, under the most promising omens, and the Pope and the King of France struck dead, or nearly so,—sets out to found the order of St. Andrew in his own country, that of Calatrava in Spain, and other knightly missions of the *Heiland aus den Wassern* elsewhere ; and thus, to the great satisfaction of all parties, the *Sons of the Valley* terminates, 'positively for the last time.'

Our reader may have already convinced himself that in this strange phantasmagoria there are not wanting indications of a very high poetic talent. We see a mind of great depth, if not of sufficient strength ; struggling with objects which, though it cannot master them, are essentially of richest significance. Had the writer only kept his piece till the ninth year ; meditating it with true diligence and unwearied will ! But the weak Werner was not a man for such things : he must reap the harvest on the morrow after seed-day, and so stands before us at last as a man capable of much, only not of bringing aught to perfection.

Of his natural dramatic genius, this work, ill-concocted as it is, affords no unfavourable specimen ; and may, indeed, have justified expectations which were never realised. It is true, he cannot yet give form and animation to a character, in the genuine poetic sense ; we do not *see* any of his *dramatis personæ*, but only hear of them : yet, in some cases, his endeavour, though imperfect, is by no means abortive ; and here, for instance, Jacques Molay, Philip Adalbert, Hugo, and the like, though not living men, have still as much life as many a buff-and-scarlet Sebastian or Barbarossa, whom we find swaggering, for years, with acceptance, on the boards. Of his spiritual beings, whom in most of his Plays he introduces too profusely, we cannot speak in commendation : they are of a mongrel nature, neither rightly dead nor alive ; in fact, they sometimes glide about like real though rather singular mortals, through

the whole piece; and only vanish as ghosts in the fifth act. But, on the other hand, in contriving theatrical incidents and sentiments; in scenic shows, and all manner of gorgeous, frightful, or astonishing machinery, Werner exhibits a copious invention, and strong though untutored feeling. Doubtless, it is all crude enough; all illuminated by an impure, barbaric splendour; not the soft, peaceful brightness of sunlight, but the red, resinous glare of playhouse torches. Werner, however, was still young; and had he been of a right spirit, all that was impure and crude might in time have become ripe and clear; and a poet of no ordinary excellence would have been moulded out of him.

But, as matters stood, this was by no means the thing Werner had most at heart. It is not the degree of poetic talent manifested in the *Sons of the Valley* that he prizes, but the religious truth shadowed forth in it. To judge from the parables of Baffometus and Phosphoros, our readers may be disposed to hold his revelations on this subject rather cheap. Nevertheless, taking up the character of *Vates* in its widest sense, Werner earnestly desires not only to be a poet, but a prophet; and, indeed, looks upon his merits in the former province as altogether subservient to his higher purposes in the latter. We have a series of the most confused and longwinded letters to Hitzig, who had now removed to Berlin; setting forth, with a singular simplicity, the mighty projects Werner was cherishing on this head. He thinks that there ought to be a new Creed promulgated, a new Body of Religionists established; and that, for this purpose, not writing, but actual preaching, can avail. He detests common Protestantism, under which he seems to mean a sort of Socinianism, or diluted French Infidelity: he talks of Jacob Böhme and Luther and Schleiermacher, and a new Trinity of 'Art, Religion and Love.' All this should be sounded in the ears of men, and in a loud voice, that so their torpid slumber, the harbinger of spiritual death, may be driven away. With the utmost gravity, he commissions his correspondent to wait upon Schlegel, Tieck and others of a like spirit, and see whether they will not join him. For his own share in the matter, he is totally indifferent; will serve in the meanest capacity, and rejoice with his whole heart, if, in zeal and ability as poets and preachers, not some only, but every one should infinitely outstrip him. We suppose he had dropped the thought of being

'One and Somewhat;' and now wished, rapt away by this divine purpose, to be 'Nought and All.'

On the *Heiland aus den Wassern* this correspondence throws no farther light: what the new Creed specially was which Werner felt so eager to plant and propagate, we nowhere learn with any distinctness. Probably he might himself have been rather at a loss to explain it in brief compass. His theogony, we suspect, was still very much *in posse;* and perhaps only the moral part of this system could stand before him with some degree of clearness. On this latter point, indeed, he is determined enough; well assured of his dogmas, and apparently waiting but for some proper vehicle in which to convey them to the minds of men. His fundamental principle of morals we have seen in part already: it does not exclusively or primarily belong to himself; being little more than that high tenet of entire Self-forgetfulness, that 'merging of the *Me* in the *Idea*;' a principle which reigns both in Stoical and Christian ethics, and is at this day common, in theory, among all German philosophers, especially of the Transcendental class. Werner has adopted this principle with his whole heart and his whole soul, as the indispensable condition of all Virtue. He believes it, we should say, intensely, and without compromise, exaggerating rather than softening or concealing its peculiarities. He will not have Happiness, under any form, to be the real or chief end of man: this is but love of enjoyment, disguise it as we like; a more complex and sometimes more respectable species of hunger, he would say; to be admitted as an indestructible element in human nature, but nowise to be recognised as the highest; on the contrary, to be resisted and incessantly warred with, till it become obedient to love of God, which is only, in the truest sense, love of Goodness, and the germ of which lies deep in the inmost nature of man; of authority superior to all sensitive impulses; forming, in fact, the grand law of his being, as subjection to it forms the first and last condition of spiritual health. He thinks that to propose a reward for virtue is to render virtue impossible. He warmly seconds Schleiermacher in declaring that even the hope of Immortality is a consideration unfit to be introduced into religion, and tending only to pervert it, and impair its sacredness. Strange as this may seem, Werner is firmly convinced of its importance; and has even enforced it specifically in a passage of his *Söhne des Thals*, which he is

at the pains to cite and expound in his correspondence with Hitzig. Here is another fraction of that wondrous dialogue between Robert d'Heredon and Adam of Valincourt, in the cavern of the *Valley:*

* * * * *

ROBERT. And Death,—so dawns it on me,—Death perhaps,
The doom that leaves nought of this *Me* remaining,
May be perhaps the Symbol of that Self-denial,—
Perhaps still more,—perhaps,—I have it, friend!—
That cripplish Immortality,—think'st not?—
Which but spins forth our paltry *Me*, so thin
And pitiful, into Infinitude,
That too must *die*?—This shallow Self of ours,
We are not nail'd to it eternally?
We can, we must be free of it, and then
Uncumbered wanton in the Force of All!

ADAM [*calling joyfully into the interior of the Cavern*].
Brethren, he has renounced! Himself has found it!
O, praised be Light! He sees! The North is sav'd!

CONCEALED VOICES *of the Old Men of the Valley.*
Hail and joy to thee, thou Strong One:
Force to thee from above, and Light!
Complete,—complete the work!

ADAM [*embracing Robert*].
Come to my heart!—&c. &c.

Such was the spirit of that new Faith, which, symbolised under mythuses of Baffometus and Phosphoros, and 'Saviours from the Waters,' and 'Trinities of Art, Religion and Love,' and to be preached abroad by the aid of Schleiermacher, and what was then called the *New Poetical School*, Werner seriously purposed, like another Luther, to cast forth, as good seed, among the ruins of decayed and down-trodden Protestantism! Whether Hitzig was still young enough to attempt executing his commission, and applying to Schlegel and Tieck for help; and if so, in what gestures of speechless astonishment, or what peals of inextinguishable laughter they answered him, we are not informed. One thing, however, is clear: that a man with so unbridled an imagination, joined to so weak an understanding and so broken a volition; who had plunged so deep in Theosophy, and still hovered so near the surface in all practical knowledge of men and their affairs; who, shattered and degraded in his own private character, could meditate such apostolic enterprises,—was a man likely, if he lived long, to play

fantastic tricks in abundance; and, at least in his religious history, to set the world a-wondering. Conversion, not to Popery, but, if it so chanced, to Braminism, was a thing nowise to be thought impossible.

Nevertheless, let his missionary zeal have justice from us. It does seem to have been grounded on no wicked or even illaudable motive: to all appearance, he not only believed what he professed, but thought it of the highest moment that others should believe it. And if the proselytising spirit, which dwells in all men, be allowed exercise even when it only assaults what it reckons Errors, still more should this be so when it proclaims what it reckons Truth, and fancies itself not taking from us what in our eyes may be good, but adding thereto what is better.

Meanwhile, Werner was not so absorbed in spiritual schemes, that he altogether overlooked his own merely temporal comfort. In contempt of former failures, he was now courting for himself a third wife, 'a young Poless of the highest personal attractions;' and this under difficulties which would have appalled an ordinary wooer: for the two had no language in common; he not understanding three words of Polish, she not one of German. Nevertheless, nothing daunted by this circumstance, nay perhaps discerning in it an assurance against many a sorrowful curtain-lecture, he prosecuted his suit, we suppose by signs and dumb-show, with such ardour, that he quite gained the fair mute; wedded her in 1801; and soon after, in her company, quitted Warsaw for Königsberg, where the helpless state of his mother required immediate attention. It is from Königsberg that most of his missionary epistles to Hitzig are written; the latter, as we have hinted before, being now stationed, by his official appointment, in Berlin. The sad duty of watching over his crazed, forsaken and dying mother, Werner appears to have discharged with true filial assiduity: for three years she lingered in the most painful state, under his nursing; and her death, in 1804, seems notwithstanding to have filled him with the deepest sorrow. This is an extract of his letter to Hitzig on that mournful occasion:

'I know not whether thou hast heard that on the 24th of February (the same day when our excellent Mnioch died in Warsaw), my mother departed here, in my arms. My Friend! God knocks with an iron hammer at our hearts; and we are duller than stone, if we do not feel it;

and madder than mad, if we think it shame to cast ourselves into the dust before the All-powerful, and let our whole so highly miserable Self be annihilated in the sentiment of His infinite greatness and long-suffering. I wish I had words to paint how inexpressibly pitiful my *Söhne des Thals* appeared to me in that hour, when, after eighteen years of neglect, I again went to partake in the Communion! This death of my mother,—the pure royal poet-and-martyr spirit, who for eight years had lain continually on a sickbed, and suffered unspeakable things,—affected me (much as, for her sake and my own, I could not but wish it) with altogether agonising feelings. Ah, Friend, how heavy do my youthful faults lie on me! How much would I give to have my mother—(though both I and my wife have of late times lived wholly for her, and had much to endure on her account)—how much would I give to have her back to me but for one week, that I might disburden my heavy-laden heart with tears of repentance! My beloved Friend, give thou no grief to thy parents: ah, no earthly voice can awaken the dead! God and Parents, that is the first concern; *all* else is secondary.'

This affection for his mother forms, as it were, a little island of light and verdure in Werner's history, where, amid so much that is dark and desolate, one feels it pleasant to linger. Here was at least one duty, perhaps indeed the only one, which, in a wayward wasted life, he discharged with fidelity: from his conduct towards this one hapless being, we may perhaps still learn that his heart, however perverted by circumstances, was not incapable of true, disinterested love. A rich heart by Nature; but unwisely squandering its riches, and attaining to a pure union only with this one heart; for it seems doubtful whether he ever loved another! His poor mother, while alive, was the haven of all his earthly voyagings; and, in after years, from amid far scenes and crushing perplexities, he often looks back to her grave with a feeling to which all bosoms must respond.[4] The date of her decease became a memorable era in his mind; as may appear from the title which he gave long afterwards to one of his most popular and tragical productions, *Die Vier-und-zwanzigste Februar* (The Twenty-fourth of February).

[4] See, for example, the Preface to his *Mutter der Makkabäer*, written at Vienna, in 1819. The tone of still but deep and heartfelt sadness which runs through the whole of this piece cannot be communicated in extracts. We quote only a half stanza, which, except in prose, we shall not venture to translate:

'Ich, dem der Liebe Kosen
Und alle Freudenrosen
Beym ersten Schaufeltosen
Am Muttergrab' entflohn.'

'I, for whom the caresses of love and all roses of joy withered away as the first shovel with its mould sounded on the coffin of my mother.'

After this event, which left him in possession of a small but competent fortune, Werner returned with his wife to his post at Warsaw. By this time, Hitzig too had been sent back, and to a higher post: he was now married likewise, and the two wives, he says, soon became as intimate as their husbands. In a little while Hoffmann joined them; a colleague in Hitzig's office, and by him ere long introduced to Werner, and the other circle of Prussian men of law; who, in this foreign capital, formed each other's chief society; and, of course, clave to one another more closely than they might have done elsewhere. Hoffmann does not seem to have loved Werner; as, indeed, he was at all times rather shy in his attachments; and to his quick eye, and more rigid fastidious feeling, the lofty theory and low selfish practice, the general diffuseness, nay incoherence of character, the pedantry and solemn affectation, too visible in the man, could nowise be hidden. Nevertheless, he feels and acknowledges the frequent charm of his conversation: for Werner many times could be frank and simple; and the true humour and abandonment with which he often launched forth into bland satire on his friends, and still oftener on himself, atoned for many of his whims and weaknesses. Probably the two could not have lived together by themselves: but in a circle of common men, where these touchy elements were attempered by a fair addition of wholesome insensibilities and formalities, they even relished one another; and, indeed, the whole social union seems to have stood on no undesirable footing. For the rest, Warsaw itself was, at this time, a gay, picturesque and stirring city; full of resources for spending life in pleasant occupation, either wisely or unwisely.[5]

It was here that, in 1805, Werner's *Kreuz an der Ostsee* (Cross on the Baltic) was written: a sort of half-operatic performance, for which Hoffmann, who to his gifts as a writer added

[5] Hitzig has thus described the first aspect it presented to Hoffmann: 'Streets of stately breadth, formed of palaces in the finest Italian style, and 'wooden huts which threatened every moment to rush down over the heads 'of their inmates; in these edifices, Asiatic pomp combined in strange union 'with Greenland squalor. An ever-moving population, forming the sharpest 'contrasts, as in a perpetual masquerade: long-bearded Jews; monks in the 'garb of every order; here veiled and deeply-shrouded nuns of strictest dis-'cipline, walking self-secluded and apart; there flights of young Polesses, in 'silk mantles of the brightest colours, talking and promenading over broad 'squares. The venerable ancient Polish noble, with moustaches, caftan, 'girdle, sabre, and red or yellow boots; the new generation equipt to the

perhaps still higher attainments both as a musician and a painter, composed the accompaniment. He complains that in this matter Werner was very ill to please. A ridiculous scene, at the first reading of the piece, the same shrewd wag has recorded in his *Serapions-Brüder:* Hitzig assures us that it is literally true, and that Hoffmann himself was the main actor in the business.

'Our Poet had invited a few friends, to read to them, in manuscript, his *Kreuz an der Ostsee*, of which they already knew some fragments that had raised their expectations to the highest stretch. Planted, as usual, in the middle of the circle, at a little miniature table, on which two clear lights, stuck in high candlesticks, were burning, sat the Poet: he had drawn the manuscript from his breast; the huge snuff-box, the blue-checked handkerchief, aptly reminding you of Baltic muslin, as in use for petticoats and other indispensable things, lay arranged in order before him.—Deep silence on all sides!—Not a breath heard!—The Poet cuts one of those unparalleled, ever-memorable, altogether indescribable faces you have seen in him, and begins.—Now you recollect, at the rising of the curtain, the Prussians are assembled on the coast of the Baltic, fishing amber, and commence by calling on the god who presides over this vocation.—So begins:

Bangputtis! Bangputtis! Bangputtis!

—Brief pause!—Incipient stare in the audience!—and from a fellow in the corner comes a small clear voice: "My dearest, most valued friend! my best of poets! if thy whole dear opera is written in that cursed language, no soul of us knows a syllable of it; and I beg, in the Devil's name, thou wouldst have the goodness to translate it first!" [76]

Of this *Kreuz an der Ostsee* our limits will permit us to say but little. It is still a fragment; the Second Part, which was often promised, and, we believe, partly written, having never yet been published. In some respects, it appears to us the best of Werner's dramas: there is a decisive coherence in the plot, such as we seldom find with him; and a firmness, a rugged

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'utmost pitch as Parisian *Incroyables;* with Turks, Greeks, Russians, Italians, 'Frenchmen, in ever-changing throng. Add to this a police of inconceiv-'able tolerance, disturbing no popular sport; so that little puppet-theatres, 'apes, camels, dancing-bears, practised incessantly in open spaces and 'streets; while the most elegant equipages, and the poorest pedestrian 'bearers of burden, stood gazing at them. Farther, a theatre in the national 'language; a good French company; an Italian opera; German players of 'at least a very passable sort; masked-balls on a quite original but highly entertaining plan; places for pleasure-excursions all round the city,' &c. &c.—Hoffmann's *Leben und Nachlass*, b. i. s. 287.

[76] Hoffmann's *Serapions-Brüder*, b. iv. s. 240.

nervous brevity in the dialogue, which is equally rare. Here, too, the mystic dreamy agencies, which, as in most of his pieces, he has interwoven with the action, harmonise more than usually with the spirit of the whole. It is a wild subject, and this helps to give it a corresponding wildness of locality. The first planting of Christianity among the Prussians by the Teutonic Knights leads us back of itself into dim ages of antiquity, of superstitious barbarism, and stern apostolic zeal: it is a scene hanging, as it were, in half-ghastly *chiaroscuro*, on a ground of primeval Night: where the Cross and St. Adalbert come in contact with the Sacred Oak and the Idols of Romova, we are not surprised that spectral shapes peer forth on us from the gloom.

In constructing and depicting of characters, Werner, indeed, is still little better than a mannerist: his persons, differing in external figure, differ too slightly in inward nature; and no one of them comes forward on us with a rightly visible or living air. Yet, in scenes and incidents, in what may be called the general costume of his subject, he has here attained a really superior excellence. The savage Prussians, with their amber-fishing, their bear-hunting, their bloody idolatry and stormful untutored energy, are brought vividly into view; no less so the Polish Court of Plozk, and the German Crusaders, in their bridal-feasts and battles, as they live and move, here placed on the verge of Heathendom, as it were, the vanguard of Light in conflict with the kingdom of Darkness. The nocturnal assault on Plozk by the Prussians, where the handful of Teutonic Knights is overpowered, but the city saved from ruin by the miraculous interposition of the 'Harper,' who now proves to be the Spirit of St. Adalbert; this, with the scene which follows it, on the Island of the Vistula, where the dawn slowly breaks over doings of woe and horrid cruelty, but of woe and cruelty atoned for by immortal hope,—belong undoubtedly to Werner's most successful efforts. With much that is questionable, much that is merely common, there are intermingled touches from the true Land of Wonders; indeed, the whole is overspread with a certain dim religious light, in which its many pettinesses and exaggerations are softened into something which at least resembles poetic harmony. We give this drama a high praise, when we say that more than once it has reminded us of Calderon.

The 'Cross on the Baltic' had been bespoken by Iffland for the Berlin theatre; but the complex machinery of the piece, the 'little flames' springing, at intervals, from the heads of certain characters, and the other supernatural ware with which it is replenished, were found to transcend the capabilities of any merely terrestrial stage. Iffland, the best actor in Germany, was himself a dramatist, and man of talent, but in all points differing from Werner, as a stage-machinist may differ from a man with the *second-sight*. Hoffmann chuckles in secret over the perplexities in which the shrewd prosaic manager and playwright must have found himself, when he came to the 'little flame.' Nothing remained but to write back a refusal, full of admiration and expostulation: and Iffland wrote one which, says Hoffmann, 'passes for a masterpiece of theatrical diplomacy.'

In this one respect, at least, Werner's next play was happier, for it actually crossed the 'Stygian marsh' of green-room hesitations, and reached, though in a maimed state, the Elysium of the boards; and this to the great joy, as it proved, both of Iffland and all other parties interested. We allude to the *Martin Luther, oder die Weihe der Kraft* (Martin Luther, or the Consecration of Strength), Werner's most popular performance; which came out at Berlin in 1807, and soon spread over all Germany, Catholic as well as Protestant; being acted, it would seem, even in Vienna, to overflowing and delighted audiences.

If instant acceptance, therefore, were a measure of dramatic merit, this play should rank high among that class of works. Nevertheless, to judge from our own impressions, the sober reader of *Martin Luther* will be far from finding in it such excellence. It cannot be named among the best dramas: it is not even the best of Werner's. There is, indeed, much scenic exhibition, many a 'fervid sentiment,' as the newspapers have it; nay, with all its mixture of coarseness, here and there a glimpse of genuine dramatic inspiration: but, as a whole, the work sorely disappoints us; it is of so loose and mixed a structure, and falls asunder in our thoughts, like the iron and the clay in the Chaldean's Dream. There is an interest, perhaps of no trivial sort, awakened in the First Act; but, unhappily, it goes on declining, till, in the Fifth, an ill-natured critic might almost say, it expires. The story is too wide for Werner's

dramatic lens to gather into a focus ; besides, the reader brings with him an image of it, too fixed for being so boldly metamorphosed, and too high and august for being ornamented with tinsel and gilt pasteboard. Accordingly, the Diet of Worms, plentifully furnished as it is with sceptres and armorial shields, continues a much grander scene in History than it is here in Fiction. Neither, with regard to the persons of the play, excepting those of Luther and Catharine, the Nun whom he weds, can we find much scope for praise. Nay, our praise even of these two must have many limitations. Catharine, though carefully enough depicted, is, in fact, little more than a common tragedy-queen, with the storminess, the love, and other stage-heroism, which belong prescriptively to that class of dignitaries. With regard to Luther himself, it is evident that Werner has put forth his whole strength in this delineation ; and, trying him by common standards, we are far from saying that he has failed. Doubtless it is, in some respects, a significant and even sublime delineation ; yet must we ask whether it is Luther, the Luther of History, or even the Luther proper for this drama ; and not rather some ideal portraiture of Zacharias Werner himself? Is not this Luther, with his too assiduous flute-playing, his trances of three days, his visions of the Devil (at whom, to the sorrow of the housemaid, he resolutely throws his huge ink-bottle), by much too spasmodic and brainsick a personage ? We cannot but question the dramatic beauty, whatever it may be in history, of that three-days trance ; the hero must before this have been in want of mere victuals ; and there, as he sits deaf and dumb, with his eyes sightless, yet fixed and staring, are we not tempted less to admire, than to send in all haste for some officer of the Humane Society?—Seriously, we cannot but regret that these and other such blemishes had not been avoided, and the character, worked into chasteness and purity, been presented to us in the simple grandeur which essentially belongs to it. For, censure as we may, it were blindness to deny that this figure of Luther has in it features of an austere loveliness, a mild yet awful beauty: undoubtedly a figure rising from the depths of the poet's soul ; and, marred as it is with such adhesions, piercing at times into the depths of ours ! Among so many poetical sins, it forms the chief redeeming virtue, and truly were almost in itself a sort of atonement.

As for the other characters, they need not detain us long.

Of Charles the Fifth, by far the most ambitious,—meant, indeed, as the counterpoise of Luther,—we may say, without hesitation, that he is a failure. An empty Gascon this; bragging of his power, and honour and the like, in a style which Charles, even in his nineteenth year, could never have used. 'One God, one Charles,' is no speech for an emperor; and, besides, is borrowed from some panegyrist of a Spanish opera-singer. Neither can we fall-in with Charles, when he tells us that 'he fears nothing,—not even God.' We humbly think he must be mistaken. With the old Miners, again, with Hans Luther and his Wife, the Reformer's parents, there is more reason to be satisfied: yet in Werner's hands simplicity is always apt, in such cases, to become too simple; and these honest peasants, like the honest Hugo in the 'Sons of the Valley,' are *very* garrulous.

The drama of *Martin Luther* is named likewise the *Consecration of Strength;* that is, we suppose, the purifying of this great theologian from all remnants of earthly passion, into a clear heavenly zeal; an operation which is brought about, strangely enough, by two half-ghosts and one whole ghost,—a little fairy girl, Catharine's servant, who impersonates Faith; a little fairy youth, Luther's servant, who represents Art; and the 'Spirit of Cotta's wife,' an honest housekeeper, but defunct many years before, who stands for Purity. These three supernaturals hover about in very whimsical wise, cultivating flowers, playing on flutes, and singing dirge-like epithalamiums over unsound sleepers: we cannot see how aught of this is to 'consecrate strength;' or, indeed, what such jack-o'-lantern personages have in the least to do with so grave a business. If the author intended by such machinery to elevate his subject from the Common, and unite it with the higher region of the Infinite and the Invisible, we cannot think that his contrivance has succeeded, or was worthy to succeed. These half-allegorical, half-corporeal beings yield no contentment anywhere: Abstract Ideas, however they may put on fleshly garments, are a class of characters whom we cannot sympathise with or delight in. Besides, how can this mere embodiment of an allegory be supposed to act on the rugged materials of life, and elevate into ideal grandeur the doings of real men, that live and move amid the actual pressure of worldly things? At best, it can stand but like a *hand in the margin:* it is not *performing* the task

proposed, but only telling us that it was meant to be performed. To our feelings, this entire episode runs like straggling bind-weed through the whole growth of the piece, not so much uniting as encumbering and choking-up what it meets with; in itself, perhaps, a green and rather pretty weed; yet here superfluous, and, like any other weed, deserving only to be altogether cut away.

Our general opinion of *Martin Luther*, it would seem, therefore, corresponds ill with that of the 'overflowing and delighted audiences' over all Germany. We believe, however, that now, in its twentieth year, the work may be somewhat more calmly judged of even there. As a classical drama it could never pass with any critic; nor, on the other hand, shall we ourselves deny that, in the lower sphere of a popular spectacle, its attractions are manifold. We find it, what, more or less, we find all Werner's pieces to be, a splendid, sparkling mass; yet not of pure metal, but of many-coloured scoria, not unmingled with metal; and must regret, as ever, that it had not been refined in a stronger furnace, and kept in the crucible till the true *silver-gleam*, glancing from it, had shown that the process was complete.

Werner's dramatic popularity could not remain without influence on him, more especially as he was now in the very centre of its brilliancy, having changed his residence from Warsaw to Berlin, some time before his *Weihe der Kraft* was acted, or indeed written. Von Schröter, one of the state-ministers, a man harmonising with Werner in his 'zeal both for religion and freemasonry,' had been persuaded by some friends to appoint him his secretary. Werner naturally rejoiced in such promotion; yet, combined with his theatrical success, it perhaps, in the long-run, did him more harm than good. He might now, for the first time, be said to see the busy and influential world with his own eyes: but to draw future instruction from it, or even to guide himself in its present complexities, he was little qualified. He took a shorter method: 'he plunged into the vortex of society,' says Hitzig, with brief expressiveness; became acquainted, indeed, with Fichte, Johannes Müller, and other excellent men, but united himself also, and with closer partiality, to players, play-lovers, and a long list of jovial, admiring, but highly unprofitable companions. His religious

schemes, perhaps rebutted by collision with actual life, lay dormant for the time, or mingled in strange union with wine-vapours, and the 'feast of reason and the flow of soul.' The result of all this might, in some measure, be foreseen. In eight weeks, for example, Werner had parted with his wife. It was not to be expected, he writes, that she should be happy with him. 'I am no bad man,' continues he, with considerable candour; 'yet a weakling in many respects (for God strengthens me also in several), fretful, capricious, greedy, impure. Thou knowest me! Still immersed in my fantasies, in my occupation: so that here, what with playhouses, what with social parties, she had no manner of enjoyment with me. *She* is innocent: I too perhaps; for can I pledge myself that I am so?' These repeated divorces of Werner's at length convinced him that he had no talent for managing wives; indeed, we subsequently find him, more than once, arguing in dissuasion of marriage altogether. To our readers one other consideration may occur: astonishment at the state of marriage-law, and the strange footing this 'sacrament' must stand on throughout Protestant Germany. For a Christian man, at least not a Mahometan, to leave *three* widows behind him, certainly wears a peculiar aspect. Perhaps it is saying much for German morality, that so absurd a system has not, by the disorders resulting from it, already brought about its own abrogation.

Of Werner's farther proceedings in Berlin, except by implication, we have little notice. After the arrival of the French armies, his secretaryship ceased; and now wifeless and placeless, in the summer of 1807, 'he felt himself,' he says, 'authorised by Fate to indulge his taste for pilgriming.' Indulge it accordingly he did; for he wandered to and fro many years, nay we may almost say, to the end of his life, like a perfect Bedouin. The various stages and occurrences of his travels he has himself recorded in a paper, furnished by him for his own *Name*, in some Biographical Dictionary. Hitzig quotes great part of it, but it is too long and too meagre for being quoted here. Werner was at Prague, Vienna, Munich,—everywhere received with open arms; 'saw at Jena, in December 1807, for the first time, the most universal and the clearest man of his age (the man whose like no one that has seen him will ever see again), the great, nay only GOETHE; and

'under his introduction, the pattern of German princes' (the Duke of Weimar); and then, 'after three ever-memorable 'months in this society, beheld at Berlin the triumphant entry 'of the pattern of European tyrants' (Napoleon). On the summit of the Rigi, at sunrise, he became acquainted with the Crown Prince, now King, of Bavaria; was by him introduced to the Swiss festival at Interlaken, and to the most 'intellectual 'lady of our time, the Baroness de Staël; and must beg to be 'credited when, after sufficient individual experience, he can 'declare, that the heart of this high and noble woman was at 'least as great as her genius.' Coppet, for a while, was his headquarters; but he went to Paris, to Weimar,[7] again to Switzerland; in short, trudged and hurried hither and thither, inconstant as an *ignis fatuus*, and restless as the Wandering Jew.

On his mood of mind during all this period Werner gives us no direct information; but so unquiet an outward life betokens of itself no inward repose; and when we, from other lights, gain a transient glimpse into the wayfarer's thoughts, they seem still more fluctuating than his footsteps. His project of a New Religion was by this time abandoned: Hitzig thinks his closer survey of life at Berlin had taught him the impracticability of such chimeras. Nevertheless, the subject of Religion, in one shape or another, nay of propagating it in new purity by teaching and preaching, had nowise vanished from his meditations. On the contrary, we can perceive that it still formed the master-principle of his soul, 'the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night,' which guided him, so far as he had any guidance, in the pathless desert of his now solitary, barren and cheerless existence. What his special opinions or prospects on the matter had, at this period, become, we nowhere learn; except, indeed, negatively,—for if he has not yet found the new, he still cordially enough detests the old. All his admiration of Luther cannot reconcile him to modern Lutheranism. This he regards but as another and more hideous impersonation of the Utilitarian spirit of the age, nay as the last triumph of Infidelity, which has now dressed itself in priestly garb, and even mounted the pulpit, to preach.

[7] It was here that Hitzig saw him for the last time, in 1809; found admittance, through his means, to a court-festival in honour of Bernadotte; and he still recollects, with gratification, 'the lordly spectacle of Goethe and that sovereign standing front to front, engaged in the liveliest conversation.'

in heavenly symbols, a doctrine which is altogether of the earth. A curious passage from his Preface to the *Cross on the Baltic* we may quote, by way of illustration. After speaking of St. Adalbert's miracles, and how his body, when purchased from the heathen for its weight in gold, became light as gossamer, he proceeds:

'Though these things may be justly doubted; yet *one* miracle cannot be denied him, the miracle, namely, that after his death he has extorted from this Spirit of Protestantism against Strength in general,—which now replaces the old heathen and catholic Spirit of Persecution, and weighs almost as much as Adalbert's body,—the admission, that he knew what he wanted; was what he wished to be; was so wholly; and therefore must have been a man at all points diametrically opposite both to that Protestantism, and to the culture of our day.' In a Note, he adds: 'There is another Protestantism, however, which constitutes in Conduct what Art is in Speculation, and which I reverence so highly, that I even place it above Art, as Conduct is above Speculation at all times. But in this, St. Adalbert and St. Luther are—colleagues: and if God, which I daily pray for, should awaken Luther to us *before* the Last Day, the *first* task he would find, in respect of that degenerate and spurious Protestantism, would be, in his somewhat rugged manner, to—*protest* against it.'

A similar, or perhaps still more reckless temper, is to be traced elsewhere, in passages of a gay, as well as grave character. This is the conclusion of a letter from Vienna, in 1807:

'We have Tragedies here which contain so many edifying maxims, that you might use them instead of *Jesus Sirach*, and have them read from beginning to end in the Berlin Sunday-Schools. Comedies, likewise, absolutely bursting with household felicity and nobleness of mind. The genuine Kasperl is dead, and Schikander has gone his ways; but here too Bigotry and Superstition are attacked in enlightened Journals with such profit, that the people care less for Popery than even you in Berlin do; and prize, for instance, the *Weihe der Kraft*, which has also been declaimed in Regensburg and Munich to thronging audiences,—chiefly for the multitude of liberal Protestant opinions therein brought to light; and regard the author, all his struggling to the contrary unheeded, as a secret *Illuminatus*, or at worst an amiable Enthusiast. In a word, Vienna is determined, without loss of time, to overtake Berlin in the career of improvement; and when I recollect that Berlin, on her side, carries Porst's *Hymn-book* with her, in her reticule, to the shows in the *Thiergarten;* and that the ray of Christiano-catholico-platonic Faith pierces deeper and deeper into your (already by nature very deep) Privy-councillor Ma'm'selle,—I almost fancy that Germany is one great madhouse; and could find in my heart to pack-up my goods, and set

off for Italy, tomorrow morning;—not, indeed, that I might work there, where follies enough are to be had too; but that, amid ruins and flowers, I might forget all things, and myself in the first place.'[8]

To Italy accordingly he went, though with rather different objects, and not quite so soon as on the morrow. In the course of his wanderings, a munificent ecclesiastical Prince, the Fürst Primas von Dalberg, had settled a yearly pension on him; so that now he felt still more at liberty to go whither he listed. In the course of a second visit to Coppet, and which lasted four months, Madame de Staël encouraged and assisted him to execute his favourite project; he set out, through Turin and Florence, and 'on the 9th of December 1809, saw, for 'the first time, the Capital of the World!' Of his proceedings here, much as we should desire to have minute details, no information is given in this Narrative; and Hitzig seems to know, by a letter, merely that 'he knelt with streaming eyes over the graves of St. Peter and St. Paul.' This little phrase says much. Werner appears likewise to have assisted at certain 'Spiritual Exercitations (*Geistliche Uebungen*);' a new invention set on foot at Rome for quickening the devotion of the faithful; consisting, so far as we can gather, in a sort of fasting-and-prayer meetings, conducted on the most rigorous principles; the considerable band of devotees being bound over to strict silence, and secluded for several days, with conventual care, from every sort of intercourse with the world. The effect of these Exercitations, Werner elsewhere declares, was edifying to an extreme degree; at parting on the threshold of their holy tabernacle, all the brethren 'embraced each other, as if intoxicated with 'divine joy; and each confessed to the other, that through-'out these precious days he had been, as it were, in heaven; 'and now, strengthened as by a soul-purifying bath, was but 'loath to venture back into the cold week-day world.' The next step from these Tabor-feasts, if, indeed, it had not preceded them, was a decisive one: 'On the 19th of April 1811, 'Werner had grace given him to return to the Faith of his 'fathers, the Catholic!'

Here, then, the 'crowning mercy' had at length arrived! This passing of the Rubicon determined the whole remainder of Werner's life; which had henceforth the merit at least of

[8] *Lebens-Abriss*, s. 70.

entire consistency. He forthwith set about the professional study of Theology; then, being perfected in this, he left Italy in 1813, taking care, however, by the road, 'to supplicate, 'and certainly not in vain, the help of the Gracious Mother at 'Loretto;' and after due preparation, under the superintendence of his patron, the Prince Archbishop von Dalberg, had himself ordained a priest at Aschaffenburg, in June 1814. Next from Aschaffenburg he hastened to Vienna; and there, with all his might, began preaching; his first auditory being the Congress of the Holy Alliance, which had then just begun its venerable sessions. 'The novelty and strangeness,' he says, 'nay originality of his appearance, secured him an extraordi-'nary concourse of hearers.' He was, indeed, a man worth hearing and seeing; for his name, noised abroad in many-sounding peals, was filling all Germany from the hut to the palace. This, he thinks, might have affected his head; but he 'had a trust in God, which bore him through.' Neither did he seem anywise anxious to still this clamour of his judges, least of all to propitiate his detractors: for already, before arriving at Vienna, he had published, as a pendant to his *Martin Luther, or the Consecration of Strength*, a Pamphlet in doggrel metre, entitled the *Consecration of Weakness*, wherein he proclaims himself to the whole world as an honest seeker and finder of truth, and takes occasion to revoke his old 'Trinity' of art, religion and love; love having now turned out to be a dangerous ingredient in such mixtures. The writing of this *Weihe der Unkraft* was reckoned by many a bold but injudicious measure,—a throwing down of the gauntlet when the lists were full of tumultuous foes, and the knight was but weak, and his cause, at best, of the most questionable sort. To reports, and calumnies, and criticisms, and vituperations, there was no limit.

What remains of this strange eventful history may be summed-up in few words. Werner accepted no special charge in the Church; but continued a private and secular Priest; preaching diligently, but only where he himself saw good; oftenest at Vienna, but in summer over all parts of Austria, in Styria, Carinthia, and even Venice. Everywhere, he says, the opinions of his hearers were 'violently divided.' At one time, he thought of becoming Monk, and had actually entered on a sort of noviciate; but he quitted the establishment rather sud-

denly, and, as he is reported to have said, 'for reasons known only to God and himself.' By degrees, his health grew very weak: yet he still laboured hard both in public and private; writing or revising poems, devotional or dramatic; preaching, and officiating as father-confessor, in which last capacity he is said to have been in great request. Of his poetical productions during this period, there is none of any moment known to us, except the *Mother of the Maccabees* (1819); a tragedy of careful structure, and apparently in high favour with the author, but which, notwithstanding, need not detain us long. In our view, it is the worst of all his pieces; a pale, bloodless, indeed quite ghost-like affair; for a cold breath as from a sepulchre chills the heart in perusing it: there is no passion or interest, but a certain woestruck martyr zeal, or rather frenzy, and this not so much storming as shrieking; not loud and resolute, but shrill, hysterical, and bleared with ineffectual tears. To read it may well sadden us: it is a convulsive fit, whose uncontrollable writhings indicate, not strength, but the last decay of that.[9]

Werner was, in fact, drawing to his latter end: his health had long been ruined; especially of later years, he had suffered much from disorders of the lungs. In 1817, he was thought to be dangerously ill; and afterwards, in 1822, when a journey to the Baths partly restored him; though he himself still felt that his term was near, and spoke and acted like a man that was shortly to depart. In January 1823, he was evidently dying: his affairs he had already settled; much of his time he spent in prayer; was constantly cheerful, at intervals even gay. 'His death,' says Hitzig, 'was especially mild. 'On the eleventh day of his disorder, he felt himself, particu-'larly towards evening, as if altogether light and well; so that 'he would hardly consent to have any one to watch with him. 'The servant whose turn it was did watch, however; he had

[9] Of his *Attila* (1808), his *Vier-und-zwanzigste Februar* (1809), his *Cunegunde* (1814), and various other pieces written in his wanderings, we have not room to speak. It is the less necessary, as the *Attila* and *Twenty-fourth of February*, by much the best of these, have already been forcibly, and on the whole fairly, characterised by Madame de Staël. Of the last-named little work we might say, with double emphasis, *Nec pueros coram populo Medea trucidet:* it has a deep and genuine tragic interest, were it not so painfully protracted into the regions of pure horror. Werner's *Sermons*, his *Hymns*, his *Preface to Thomas à Kempis*, &c. are entirely unknown to us.

'sat down by the bedside between two and three next morning '(the 17th), and continued there a considerable while, in the 'belief that his patient was asleep. Surprised, however, that 'no breathing was to be heard, he hastily aroused the house-'hold, and it was found that Werner had already passed 'away.'

In imitation, it is thought, of Lipsius, he bequeathed his Pen to the treasury of the Virgin at Mariazell, 'as a chief instrument of his aberrations, his sins and his repentance.' He was honourably interred at Enzersdorf on the Hill; where a simple inscription, composed by himself, begs the wanderer to 'pray charitably for his poor soul;' and expresses a trembling hope that, as to Mary Magdalen, 'because she loved much,' so to him also 'much may be forgiven.'

We have thus, in hurried movement, travelled over Zacharias Werner's Life and Works; noting down from the former such particulars as seemed most characteristic; and gleaning from the latter some more curious passages, less indeed with a view to their intrinsic excellence, than to their fitness for illustrating the man. These scattered indications we must now leave our readers to interpret each for himself: each will adjust them into that combination which shall best harmonise with his own way of thought. As a writer, Werner's character will occasion little difficulty. A richly gifted nature; but never wisely guided, or resolutely applied; a loving heart; an intellect subtle and inquisitive, if not always clear and strong; a gorgeous, deep and bold imagination; a true, nay keen and burning sympathy with all high, all tender and holy things: here lay the main elements of no common poet; save only that one was still wanting,—the force to cultivate them, and mould them into pure union. But they have remained uncultivated, disunited, too often struggling in wild disorder: his poetry, like his life, is still not so much an edifice as a quarry. Werner had cast a look into perhaps the very deepest region of the Wonderful; but he had not learned to live there: he was yet no denizen of that mysterious land; and, in his visions, its splendour is strangely mingled and overclouded with the flame or smoke of mere earthly fire. Of his dramas we have already spoken; and with much to praise, found always more to censure. In his rhymed pieces, his shorter, more didactic poems,

we are better satisfied: here, in the rude, jolting vehicle of a certain Sternhold-and-Hopkins metre, we often find a strain of true pathos, and a deep though quaint significance. His prose, again, is among the worst known to us: degraded with silliness; diffuse, nay tautological, yet obscure and vague; contorted into endless involutions; a misshapen, lumbering, complected coil, well-nigh inexplicable in its entanglements, and seldom worth the trouble of unravelling. He does not move *through* his subject, and arrange it, and rule over it: for the most part, he but welters in it, and laboriously tumbles it, and at last sinks under it.

As a man, the ill-fated Werner can still less content us. His feverish, inconstant and wasted life we have already looked at. Hitzig, his determined wellwisher, admits that in practice he was selfish, wearying out his best friends by the most barefaced importunities; a man of no dignity; avaricious, greedy, sensual, at times obscene; in discourse, with all his humour and heartiness, apt to be intolerably longwinded; and of a maladroitness, a blank ineptitude, which exposed him to incessant ridicule and manifold mystifications from people of the world. Nevertheless, under all this rubbish, contends the friendly Biographer, there dwelt, for those who could look more narrowly, a spirit, marred indeed in its beauty, and languishing in painful conscious oppression, yet never wholly forgetful of its original nobleness. Werner's soul was made for affection; and often as, under his too rude collisions with external things, it was struck into harshness and dissonance, there was a tone which spoke of melody, even in its jarrings. A kind, a sad and heartfelt remembrance of his friends seems never to have quitted him: to the last he ceased not from warm love to men at large; nay to awaken in them, with such knowledge as he had, a sense for what was best and highest, may be said to have formed the earnest, though weak and unstable aim of his whole existence. The truth is, his defects as a writer were also his defects as a man: he was feeble, and without volition; in life, as in poetry, his endowments fell into confusion; his character relaxed itself on all sides into incoherent expansion; his activity became gigantic endeavour, followed by most dwarfish performance.

The grand incident of his life, his adoption of the Roman Catholic religion, is one on which we need not heap farther

censure; for already, as appears to us, it is rather liable to be too harshly than too leniently dealt with. There is a feeling in the popular mind, which, in well-meant hatred of inconsistency, perhaps in general too sweepingly condemns such changes. Werner, it should be recollected, *had* at all periods of his life *a* religion; nay he hungered and thirsted after truth in this matter, as after the highest good of man; a fact which of itself must, in this respect, set him far above the most consistent of mere unbelievers,—in whose barren and callous soul consistency perhaps is no such brilliant virtue. We pardon genial weather for its changes; but the steadiest of all climates is that of Greenland.

Farther, we must say that, strange as it may seem, in Werner's whole conduct, both before and after his conversion, there is not visible the slightest trace of insincerity. On the whole, there are fewer genuine renegades than men are apt to imagine. Surely, indeed, that must be a nature of extreme baseness, who feels that, in worldly good, he *can* gain by such a step. Is the contempt, the execration of all that have known and loved us, and of millions that have never known us, to be weighed against a mess of pottage, or a piece of money? We hope there are not many, even in the rank of sharpers, that would think so. But for Werner there was no gain in any way; nay rather certainty of loss. He enjoyed or sought no patronage; with his own resources he was already independent though poor, and on a footing of good esteem with all that was most estimable in his country. His little pension, conferred on him, at a prior date, by a Catholic Prince, was not continued after his conversion, except by the Duke of Weimar, a Protestant. He became a mark for calumny; the defenceless butt at which every callow witling made his proof-shot; his character was more deformed and mangled than that of any other man. What had he to gain? Insult and persecution; and with these, as candour bids us believe, the approving voice of his own conscience. To judge from his writings, he was far from repenting of the change he had made; his Catholic faith evidently stands in his own mind as the first blessing of his life; and he clings to it as the anchor of his soul. Scarcely more than once (in the Preface to his *Mutter der Makkabäer*) does he allude to the legions of falsehoods that were in circulation against him; and it is in a spirit which, without entirely con-

cealing the querulousness of nature, nowise fails in the meekness and endurance which became him as a Christian. Here is a fragment of another Paper, published since his death, as it was meant to be; which exhibits him in a still clearer light. The reader may contemn, or, what will be better, pity and sympathise with him; but the structure of this strange piece surely bespeaks anything but insincerity. We translate it with all its breaks and fantastic crotchets, as it stands before us:

'TESTAMENTARY INSCRIPTION, from Friedrich Ludwig Zacharias Werner, a son,' &c.—(here follows a statement of his parentage and birth, with vacant spaces for the date of his death),—'of the following lines, submitted to all such as have more or less felt any friendly interest in his unworthy person, with the request to take warning by his example, and charitably to remember the poor soul of the writer before God, in prayer and good deeds.

'Begun at Florence, on the 24th of September, about eight in the evening, amid the still distant sound of approaching thunder. Concluded, when and where God will!

'Motto, Device and Watchword in Death: *Remittuntur ei peccata multa, quoniam dilexit multum! ! ! Lucas*, caput vii. v. 47.

'N.B. Most humbly and earnestly, and in the name of God, does the Author of this Writing beg, of such honest persons as may find it, to submit the same in any suitable way to public examination.

'*Fecisti nos, Domine, ad Te; et irrequietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in Te.* S. Augustinus.

'*Per multa dispergitur, et hic illucque quærit* (*cor*) *ubi requiescere possit, et nihil invenit quod ei sufficiat, donec ad ipsum* (*sc. Deum*) *redeat.* S. Bernardus.

'In the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen!

'The thunder came hither, and is still rolling, though now at a distance.—The name of the Lord be praised! Hallelujah!—I BEGIN:

'This Paper must needs be brief; because the appointed term for my life itself may already be near at hand. There are not wanting examples of important and unimportant men, who have left behind them in writing the defence, or even sometimes the accusation, of their earthly life. Without estimating such procedure, I am not minded to

imitate it. With trembling I reflect that I myself shall first learn in its whole terrific compass what properly I was, when these lines shall be read by men; that is to say, in a point of Time which for me will be no Time; in a condition wherein all experience will for me be too late!

Rex tremendæ majestatis,
Qui salvandos salvas gratis,
Salva me, fons pietatis! ! !

But if I do, till that day when All shall be laid open, draw a veil over my past life, it is not merely out of false shame that I so order it; for though not free from this vice also, I would willingly make known my guilt to all and every one whom my voice might reach, could I hope, by such confession, to atone for what I have done; or thereby to save a single soul from perdition. There are two motives, however, which forbid me to make such an open personal revelation after death: the *one*, because the unclosing of a pestilential grave may be dangerous to the health of the uninfected looker-on; the *other*, because in my Writings (which may God forgive me!), amid a wilderness of poisonous weeds and garbage, there may also be here and there a medicinal herb lying scattered, from which poor patients, to whom it might be useful, would start back with shuddering, did they know the pestiferous soil on which it grew.

'So much, however, in regard to those good creatures as they call themselves, namely to those feeble weaklings who brag of what they designate their good hearts,—so much must I say before God, that such a heart alone, when it is not checked and regulated by forethought and steadfastness, is not only incapable of saving its possessor from destruction, but is rather certain to hurry him, full speed, into that abyss, where I have been, whence I—perhaps? ! ! !—by God's grace am snatched, and from which may God mercifully preserve every reader of these lines.'[10]

All this is melancholy enough; but it is not like the writing of a hypocrite or repentant apostate. To Protestantism, above all things, Werner shows no thought of returning. In allusion to a rumour, which had spread, of his having given up Catholicism, he says (in the *Preface* already quoted):

'A stupid falsehood I must reckon it; since, according to my deepest conviction, it is as impossible that a soul in Bliss should return back into the Grave, as that a man who, like me, after a life of error and search has found the priceless jewel of Truth, should, I will not say, give up the same, but hesitate to sacrifice for it blood and life, nay many things perhaps far dearer, with joyful heart, when the one good cause is concerned.'

[10] Werner's *Letzte Lebenstagen* (quoted by Hitzig, p. 80).

And elsewhere in a private letter:

'I not only assure thee, but I beg of thee to assure all men, if God should ever so withdraw the light of his grace from me, that I ceased to be a Catholic, I would a thousand times sooner join myself to Judaism, or to the Bramins on the Ganges: but to that shallowest, driest, most contradictory, inanest Inanity of Protestantism, *never, never, never!*'

Here, perhaps, there is a touch of priestly, of almost feminine vehemence; for it is to a Protestant and an old friend that he writes: but the conclusion of his *Preface* shows him in a better light. Speaking of Second Parts, and regretting that so many of his works were unfinished, he adds:

'But what specially comforts me is the prospect of—our general Second Part, where, even in the first Scene, *this* consolation, that there *all* our works will be known, may not indeed prove solacing *for us all;* but where, through the strength of Him that alone completes all works, it will be granted to those whom He has saved, not only to know each other, but even to know Him, as by Him they are known!—With my trust in Christ, whom I have not yet won, I regard, with the Teacher of the Gentiles, all things but dross that I may win Him; and to Him cordially and lovingly do I, in life or at death, commit you all, my beloved Friends and my beloved Enemies!'

On the whole, we cannot think it doubtful that Werner's belief was real and heartfelt. But how then, our wondering readers may inquire, if his belief was real and not pretended, *how* then did he believe? He, who scoffs in infidel style at the truths of Protestantism, by what alchemy did he succeed in tempering into credibility the harder and bulkier dogmas of Popery? Of Popery, too, the frauds and gross corruptions of which he has so fiercely exposed in his *Martin Luther;* and this, moreover, without cancelling, or even softening his vituperations, long after his conversion, in the very last edition of that drama? To this question, we are far from pretending to have any answer that altogether satisfies ourselves; much less that shall altogether satisfy others. Meanwhile, there are two considerations which throw light on the difficulty for us: these, as some step, or at least, attempt towards a solution of it, we shall not withhold.

The *first* lies in Werner's individual character and mode of life. Not only was he born a *mystic*, not only had he lived from of old amid freemasonry, and all manner of cabalistic and other traditionary chimeras; he was also, and had long

been, what is emphatically called *dissolute;* a word which has now lost somewhat of its original force; but which, as applied here, is still more just and significant in its etymological than in its common acceptation. He was a man *dissolute;* that is, by a long course of vicious indulgences, enervated and *loosened asunder.* Everywhere in Werner's life and actions we discern a mind relaxed from its proper tension; no longer capable of effort and toilsome resolute vigilance; but floating almost passively with the current of its impulses, in languid, imaginative, Asiatic reverie. That such a man should discriminate, with sharp fearless logic, between beloved errors and unwelcome truths, was not to be expected. His belief is likely to have been *persuasion* rather than *conviction*, both as it related to Religion, and to other subjects. What, or how much a man in this way may bring himself to *believe*, with such force and distinctness as he honestly and usually calls *belief*, there is no predicting.

But *another* consideration, which we think should nowise be omitted, is the general state of religious opinion in Germany, especially among such minds as Werner was most apt to take for his exemplars. To this complex and highly interesting subject we can, for the present, do nothing more than allude. So much, however, we may say: It is a common theory among the Germans, that every Creed, every Form of worship, is a *form* merely; the mortal and ever-changing *body*, in which the immortal and unchanging *spirit* of Religion is, with more or less completeness, expressed to the material eye, and made manifest and influential among the doings of men. It is thus, for instance, that Johannes Müller, in his *Universal History*, professes to consider the Mosaic Law, the creed of Mahomet, nay Luther's Reformation; and, in short, all other systems of Faith; which he scruples not to designate, without special praise or censure, simply as *Vorstellungsarten*, 'Modes of Representation.' We could report equally singular things of Schelling and others, belonging to the philosophic class; nay of Herder, a Protestant clergyman, and even bearing high authority in the Church. Now, it is clear, in a country where such opinions are openly and generally professed, a change of religious creed must be comparatively a slight matter. Conversions to Catholicism are accordingly by no means unknown among the Germans: Friedrich Schlegel, and the younger

Count von Stolberg, men, as we should think, of vigorous intellect, and of character above suspicion, were colleagues, or rather precursors, of Werner in this adventure; and, indeed, formed part of his acquaintance at Vienna. It is but, they would perhaps say, as if a melodist, inspired with harmony of inward music, should choose this instrument in preference to that, for giving voice to it: the inward inspiration is the grand concern; and to express it, the 'deep, majestic, solemn organ' of the Unchangeable Church may be better fitted than the 'scrannel pipe' of a withered, trivial, Arian Protestantism. That Werner, still more that Schlegel and Stolberg could, on the strength of such hypotheses, put-off or put-on their religious creed, like a new suit of apparel, we are far from asserting; they are men of earnest hearts, and seem to have a deep feeling of devotion: but it should be remembered, that what forms the groundwork of their religion is professedly not Demonstration but Faith; and so pliant a theory could not but help to soften the transition from the former to the latter. That some such principle, in one shape or another, lurked in Werner's mind, we think we can perceive from several indications; among others, from the Prologue to his last tragedy, where, mysteriously enough, under the emblem of a Phœnix, he seems to be shadowing forth the history of his own Faith; and represents himself even then as merely 'climbing the *tree*, where the pinions of his Phœnix last *vanished*;' but not hoping to regain that blissful vision, till his eyes shall have been opened by death.

On the whole, we must not pretend to understand Werner, or expound him with scientific rigour: acting many times with only half consciousness, he was always, in some degree, an enigma to himself, and may well be obscure to us. Above all, there are mysteries and unsounded abysses in every human heart; and that is but a questionable philosophy which undertakes so readily to explain them. Religious belief especially, at least when it seems heartfelt and well-intentioned, is no subject for harsh or even irreverent investigation. He is a wise man that, having such a belief, knows and sees clearly the grounds of it in himself: and those, we imagine, who have explored with strictest scrutiny the secret of their own bosoms will be least apt to rush with intolerant violence into that of other men's.

'The good Werner,' says Jean Paul, 'fell, like our more 'vigorous Hoffmann, into the poetical fermenting-vat (*Gährbot-'tich*) of our time, where all Literatures, Freedoms, Tastes 'and Untastes are foaming through each other; and where all 'is to be found, excepting truth, diligence and the polish of the 'file. Both would have come forth clearer had they studied in 'Lessing's day.'[11] We cannot justify Werner: yet let him be condemned with pity! And well were it could each of us apply to himself those words, which Hitzig, in his friendly indignation, would 'thunder in the ears' of many a German gainsayer: *Take thou the beam out of thine own eye; then shalt thou see clearly to take the mote out of thy brother's.*

[11] Letter to Hitzig, in *Jean Pauls Leben*, by Döring.

GOETHE'S HELENA.[1]

[1828.]

NOVALIS has rather tauntingly asserted of Goethe, that the grand law of his being is to conclude whatsoever he undertakes; that, let him engage in any task, no matter what its difficulties or how small its worth, he cannot quit it till he has mastered its whole secret, finished it, and made the result of it his own. This, surely, whatever Novalis might think, is a quality of which it is far safer to have too much than too little: and if, in a friendlier spirit, we admit that it does strikingly belong to Goethe, these his present occupations will not seem out of harmony with the rest of his life; but rather it may be regarded as a singular constancy of fortune, which now allows him, after completing so many single enterprises, to adjust deliberately the details and combination of the whole; and thus, in perfecting his individual works, to put the last hand to the highest of all his works, his own literary character, and leave the impress of it to posterity in that form and accompaniment which he himself reckons fittest. For the last two years, as many of our readers may know, the venerable Poet has been employed in a patient and thorough revisal of all his Writings; an edition of which, designated as the 'complete and final' one, was commenced in 1827, under external encouragements of the most flattering sort, and with arrangements for private coöperation, which, as we learn, have secured the constant progress of the work 'against every accident.' The first *Lieferung*, of five volumes, is now in our hands; a second of like extent, we understand to be already on its way hither; and thus by regular 'Deliveries,' from half-year to half-year, the whole Forty Volumes are to be completed in 1831.

[1] FOREIGN REVIEW, No. 2.—*Goethes Sämmtliche Werke. Vollständige Ausgabe letzter Hand.* (Goethe's Collective Works. Complete Edition, with his final Corrections.)—First Portion, vol. i.-v. 16mo and 8vo. Cotta; Stuttgard and Tübingen, 1827.

To the lover of German literature, or of literature in general, this undertaking will not be indifferent: considering, as he must do, the works of Goethe to be among the most important which Germany for some centuries has sent forth, he will value their correctness and completeness for its own sake; and not the less, as forming the conclusion of a long process to which the last step was still wanting; whereby he may not only enjoy the result, but instruct himself by following so great a master through the changes which led to it. We can now add, that, to the mere book-collector also, the business promises to be satisfactory. This Edition, avoiding any attempt at splendour or unnecessary decoration, ranks, nevertheless, in regard to accuracy, convenience, and true simple elegance, among the best specimens of German typography. The cost too seems moderate; so that, on every account, we doubt not but these tasteful volumes will spread far and wide in their own country, and by and by, we may hope, be met with here in many a British library.

Hitherto, in this First Portion, we have found little or no alteration of what was already known; but, in return, some changes of arrangement; and, what is more important, some additions of heretofore unpublished poems; in particular, a piece entitled '*Helena, a classico-romantic Phantasmagoria*,' which occupies some eighty pages of Volume Fourth. It is to this piece that we now propose directing the attention of our readers. Such of these as have studied *Helena* for themselves, must have felt how little calculated it is, either intrinsically or by its extrinsic relations and allusions, to be rendered very interesting or even very intelligible to the English public, and may incline to augur ill of our enterprise. Indeed, to our own eyes it already looks dubious enough. But the dainty little 'Phantasmagoria,' it would appear, has become a subject of diligent and truly wonderful speculation to our German neighbours: of which also some vague rumours seem now to have reached this country; and these likely enough to awaken on all hands a curiosity,[2] which, whether intelligent or idle, it were a kind of good deed to allay. In a Journal of this sort, what little light on such a matter is at our disposal may naturally be looked for.

[2] See, for instance, the *Athenæum*, No. 7, where an article stands headed with these words: FAUST, HELEN OF TROY, AND LORD BYRON.

Helena, like many of Goethe's works, by no means carries its significance written on its forehead, so that he who runs may read; but, on the contrary, it is enveloped in a certain mystery, under coy disguises, which, to hasty readers, may be not only offensively obscure, but altogether provoking and impenetrable. Neither is this any new thing with Goethe. Often has he produced compositions, both in prose and verse, which bring critic and commentator into straits, or even to a total nonplus. Some we have wholly parabolic; some half-literal, half-parabolic; these latter are occasionally studied, by dull heads, in the literal sense alone; and not only studied, but condemned: for, in truth, the outward meaning seems unsatisfactory enough, were it not that ever and anon we are reminded of a cunning, manifold meaning which lies hidden under it; and incited by capricious beckonings to evolve this, more and more completely, from its quaint concealment.

Did we believe that Goethe adopted this mode of writing as a vulgar lure, to confer on his poems the interest which might belong to so many charades, we should hold it a very poor proceeding. Of this most readers of Goethe will know that he is incapable. Such juggleries, and uncertain anglings for distinction, are a class of accomplishments to which he has never made any pretension. The truth is, this style has, in many cases, its own appropriateness. Certainly, in all matters of Business and Science, in all expositions of fact or argument, clearness and ready comprehensibility are a great, often an indispensable object. Nor is there any man better aware of this principle than Goethe, or who more rigorously adheres to it, or more happily exemplifies it, wherever it seems applicable. But in this, as in many other respects, Science and Poetry, having separate purposes, may have each its several law. If an artist has conceived his subject in the secret shrine of his own mind, and knows, with a knowledge beyond all power of cavil, that it is true and pure, he may choose his own manner of exhibiting it, and will generally be the fittest to choose it well. One degree of light, he may find, will beseem one delineation; quite a different degree of light another. The face of Agamemnon was not painted but hidden in the old picture: the Veiled Figure at Sais was the most expressive in the Temple. In fact, the grand point is to *have* a meaning, a genuine, deep and noble one; the proper form for embodying this, the form

best suited to the subject and to the author, will gather round it almost of its own accord. We profess ourselves unfriendly to no mode of communicating Truth; which we rejoice to meet with in all shapes, from that of the child's Catechism to the deepest poetical Allegory. Nay the Allegory itself may sometimes be the truest part of the matter. John Bunyan, we hope, is nowise our best theologian; neither, unhappily, is theology our most attractive science; yet which of our compends and treatises, nay which of our romances and poems, lives in such mild sunshine as the good old *Pilgrim's Progress* in the memory of so many men?

Under Goethe's management, this style of composition has often a singular charm. The reader is kept on the alert, ever conscious of his own active coöperation; light breaks on him, and clearer and clearer vision, by degrees; till at last the whole lovely Shape comes forth, definite, it may be, and bright with heavenly radiance, or fading, on this side and that, into vague expressive mystery; but true in both cases, and beautiful with nameless enchantments, as the poet's own eye may have beheld it. We love it the more for the labour it has given us: we almost feel as if we ourselves had assisted in its creation. And herein lies the highest merit of a piece, and the proper art of reading it. We have not *read* an author till we have seen his object, whatever it may be, as *he* saw it. Is it a matter of reasoning, and has he reasoned stupidly and falsely? We should understand the circumstances which, to his mind, made it seem true, or persuaded him to write it, knowing that it was not so. In any other way we do him injustice if we judge him. Is it of poetry? His words are so many symbols, to which we ourselves must furnish the interpretation; or they remain, as in all prosaic minds the words of poetry ever do, a dead letter: indications they are, barren in themselves, but, by following which, we also may reach, or approach, that Hill of Vision where the poet stood, beholding the glorious scene which it is the purport of his poem to show others.

A reposing state, in which the Hill were brought under us, not we obliged to mount it, might indeed for the present be more convenient; but, in the end, it could not be equally satisfying. Continuance of passive pleasure, it should never be forgotten, is here, as under all conditions of mortal existence, an impossibility. Everywhere in life, the true question is, not

what we *gain*, but what we *do*: so also in intellectual matters, in conversation, in reading, which is more precise and careful conversation, it is not what we *receive*, but what we are made to *give*, that chiefly contents and profits us. True, the mass of readers will object; because, like the mass of men, they are too indolent. But if any one affect, not the active and watchful, but the passive and somnolent line of study, are there not writers expressly fashioned for him, enough and to spare? It is but the smaller number of books that become more instructive by a second perusal: the great majority are as perfectly plain as perfect triteness can make them. Yet, if time is precious, no book that will not improve by repeated readings deserves to be read at all. And were there an artist of a right spirit; a man of wisdom, conscious of his high vocation, of whom we could know beforehand that he had not written without purpose and earnest meditation, that he knew what he had written, and had embodied in it, more or less, the creations of a deep and noble soul,—should we not draw near to him reverently, as disciples to a master; and what task could there be more profitable than to read him as we have described, to study him even to his minutest meanings? For, were not this to think as he had thought, to see with his gifted eyes, to make the very mood and feeling of his great and rich mind the mood also of our poor and little one? It is under the consciousness of some such mutual relation that Goethe writes, and that his countrymen now reckon themselves bound to read him: a relation singular, we might say solitary, in the present time; but which it is ever necessary to bear in mind in estimating his literary procedure.

To justify it in this particular, much more might be said, were that our chief business at present. But what mainly concerns us here, is to know that such, justified or not, is the poet's manner of writing; which also must prescribe for us a correspondent manner of studying him, if we study him at all. For the rest, on this latter point he nowhere expresses any undue anxiety. His works have invariably been sent forth without preface, without note or comment of any kind; but left, sometimes plain and direct, sometimes dim and typical, in what degree of clearness or obscurity he himself may have judged best, to be scanned, and glossed, and censured, and distorted, as might please the innumerable multitude of critics; to whose

verdicts he has been, for a great part of his life, accused of listening with unwarrantable composure. *Helena* is no exception to that practice, but rather among the strong instances of it. This *Interlude to Faust* presents itself abruptly, under a character not a little enigmatic; so that, at first view, we know not well what to make of it; and only after repeated perusals, will the scattered glimmerings of significance begin to coalesce into continuous light, and the whole, in any measure, rise before us with that greater or less degree of coherence which it may have had in the mind of the poet. Nay, after all, no perfect clearness may be attained, but only various approximations to it; hints and half-glances of a meaning, which is still shrouded in vagueness; nay, to the just picturing of which this very vagueness was essential. For the whole piece has a dreamlike character; and in these cases, no prudent soothsayer will be altogether confident. To our readers we must now endeavour, so far as possible, to show both the dream and its interpretation: the former as it stands written before us; the latter from our own private conjecture alone; for of those strange German comments we yet know nothing except by the faintest hearsay.

Helena forms part of a continuation to *Faust;* but, happily for our present undertaking, its connexion with the latter work is much looser than might have been expected. We say happily; because *Faust,* though considerably talked of in England, appears still to be nowise known. We have made it our duty to inspect the English Translation of *Faust,* as well as the Extracts which accompany Retzsch's *Outlines;* and various disquisitions and animadversions, vituperative or laudatory, grounded on these two works; but unfortunately have found there no cause to alter the above persuasion. *Faust* is emphatically a work of Art; a work matured in the mysterious depths of a vast and wonderful mind; and bodied forth with that truth and curious felicity of composition, in which this man is generally admitted to have no living rival. To reconstruct such a work in another language; to show it in its hard yet graceful strength; with those slight witching traits of pathos or of sarcasm, those glimpses of solemnity or terror, and so many reflexes and evanescent echoes of meaning, which connect it in strange union with the whole Infinite of thought,—

were business for a man of different powers than has yet attempted German translation among us. In fact, *Faust* is to be read not once but many times, if we would understand it: every line, every word has its purport; and only in such minute inspection will the essential significance of the poem display itself. Perhaps it is even chiefly by following these fainter traces and tokens that the true point of vision for the whole is discovered to us; that we get to stand at last in the proper scene of Faust; a wild and wondrous region, where in pale light the primeval Shapes of Chaos,—as it were, the Foundations of Being itself,—seem to loom forth, dim and huge, in the vague Immensity around us; and the life and nature of man, with its brief interests, its misery and sin, its mad passion and poor frivolity, struts and frets its hour, encompassed and overlooked by that stupendous All, of which it forms an indissoluble though so mean a fraction. He who would study all this must for a long time, we are afraid, be content to study it in the original.

But our English criticisms of *Faust* have been of a still more unedifying sort. Let any man fancy the *Œdipus Tyrannus* discovered for the first time; translated from an unknown Greek manuscript, by some ready-writing manufacturer; and 'brought out' at Drury Lane, with new music, made as 'apothecaries make new mixtures, by pouring out of one vessel 'into another'! Then read the theatrical report in the Morning Papers, and the Magazines of next month. Was not the whole affair rather 'heavy'? How indifferent did the audience sit; how little use was made of the handkerchief, except by such as took snuff! Did not Œdipus somewhat remind us of a blubbering schoolboy, and Jocasta of a decayed milliner? Confess that the plot was monstrous; nay, considering the marriage-law of England, utterly immoral. On the whole, what a singular deficiency of *taste* must this Sophocles have laboured under! But probably he was excluded from the 'society of the influential classes;' for, after all, the man is not without indications of genius: had *we* had the training of him—And so on, through all the variations of the critical cornpipe.

So might it have fared with the ancient Grecian; for so has it fared with the only modern that writes in a Grecian spirit. This treatment of *Faust* may deserve to be mentioned, for various reasons; not to be lamented over, because, as in

much more important instances, it is inevitable, and lies in the nature of the case. Besides, a better state of things is evidently enough coming round. By and by, the labours, poetical and intellectual, of the Germans, as of other nations, will appear before us in their true shape; and *Faust*, among the rest, will have justice done it. For ourselves, it were unwise presumption, at any time, to pretend opening the full poetical significance of *Faust;* nor is this the place for making such an attempt. Present purposes will be answered if we can point out some general features and bearings of the piece; such as to exhibit its relations with *Helena;* by what contrivances this latter has been intercalated into it, and how far the strange picture and the strange framing it is enclosed in correspond.

The story of Faust forms one of the most remarkable productions of the Middle Ages; or rather, it is the most striking embodiment of a highly remarkable belief, which originated or prevailed in those ages. Considered strictly, it may take the rank of a Christian mythus, in the same sense as the story of Prometheus, of Titan, and the like, are Pagan ones; and to our keener inspection, it will disclose a no less impressive or characteristic aspect of the same human nature,—here bright, joyful, self-confident, smiling even in its sternness; there deep, meditative, awe-struck, austere,—in which both they and it took their rise. To us, in these days, it is not easy to estimate how this story of Faust, invested with its magic and infernal horrors, must have harrowed up the souls of a rude and earnest people, in an age when its dialect was not yet obsolete, and such contracts with the principle of Evil were thought not only credible in general, but possible to every individual auditor who here shuddered at the mention of them. The day of Magic is gone by; Witchcraft has been put a stop to by act of parliament. But the mysterious relations which it emblemed still continue; the Soul of Man still fights with the dark influences of Ignorance, Misery and Sin; still lacerates itself, like a captive bird, against the iron limits which Necessity has drawn round it; still follows False Shows, seeking peace and good on paths where no peace or good is to be found. In this sense, *Faust* may still be considered as true; nay as a truth of the most impressive sort, and one which will always remain true.

To body forth in modern symbols a feeling so old and deep-rooted in our whole European way of thought, were a task not unworthy of the highest poetical genius. In Germany, accordingly, it has several times been attempted, and with very various success. Klinger has produced a Romance of *Faust*, full of rugged sense, and here and there not without considerable strength of delineation; yet, on the whole, of an essentially unpoetical character; dead, or living with only a mechanical life; coarse, almost gross, and to our minds far too redolent of pitch and bitumen. Maler Müller's *Faust*, which is a Drama, must be regarded as a much more genial performance, so far as it goes: the secondary characters, the Jews and rakish Students, often remind us of our own Fords and Marlowes. His main persons, however, Faust and the Devil, are but inadequately conceived; Faust is little more than self-willed, supercilious, and, alas, insolvent; the Devils, above all, are savage, long-winded and insufferably noisy. Besides, the piece has been left in a fragmentary state; it can nowise pass as the best work of Müller's.[3] Klingemann's *Faust*, which also is (or lately *was*) a Drama, we have never seen; and have only heard of it as of a tawdry and hollow article, suited for immediate use, and immediate oblivion.

Goethe, we believe, was the first who tried this subject;

[3] Friedrich Müller (more commonly called *Maler*, or *Painter* Müller) is here, so far as we know, named for the first time to English readers. Nevertheless, in any solid study of German literature this author must take precedence of many hundreds whose reputation has travelled faster. But Müller has been unfortunate in his own country, as well as here. At an early age, meeting with no success as a poet, he quitted that art for painting; and retired, perhaps in disgust, into Italy; where also but little preferment seems to have awaited him. His writings, after almost half a century of neglect, were at length brought into sight and general estimation by Ludwig Tieck; at a time when the author might indeed say, that he was 'old and could not enjoy it, solitary and could not impart it,' but not, unhappily, that he was 'known and did not want it,' for his fine genius had yet made for itself no free way amid so many obstructions, and still continued unrewarded and unrecognised. His paintings, chiefly of still-life and animals, are said to possess a true though no very extraordinary merit: but of his poetry we will venture to assert that it bespeaks a genuine feeling and talent, nay rises at times even into the higher regions of Art. His *Adam's Awakening*, his *Satyr Mopsus*, his *Nusskernen* (Nutshelling), informed as they are with simple kindly strength, with clear vision, and love of nature, are incomparably the best German, or, indeed, modern Idyls; his *Genoveva* will stand reading even with that of Tieck. These things are now acknowledged among the Germans; but to Müller the acknowledgment is of no avail. He died some two years ago at Rome, where he seems to have subsisted latterly as a sort of a picture-cicerone.

and is, on all hands, considered as by far the most successful. His manner of treating it appears to us, so far as we can understand it, peculiarly just and happy. He retains the supernatural vesture of the story, but retains it with the consciousness, on his and our part, that it is a chimera. His art-magic comes forth in doubtful twilight; vague in its outline; interwoven everywhere with light sarcasm; nowise as a real Object, but as a real Shadow of an Object, which is also real, yet lies beyond our horizon, and except in its shadows, cannot itself be seen. Nothing were simpler than to look in this new poem for a new 'Satan's Invisible World displayed,' or any effort to excite the sceptical minds of these days by goblins, wizards and other infernal ware. Such enterprises belong to artists of a different species: Goethe's Devil is a cultivated personage, and acquainted with the modern sciences; sneers at witchcraft and the black-art, even while employing them, as heartily as any member of the French Institute; for he is a *philosophe*, and doubts most things, nay half disbelieves even his own existence. It is not without a cunning effort that all this is managed; but managed, in a considerable degree, it is; for a world of magic is opened to us which, we might almost say, we feel at once to be true and not true.

In fact, Mephistopheles comes before us, not arrayed in the terrors of Cocytus and Phlegethon, but in the natural indelible deformity of Wickedness; he is the Devil, not of Superstition, but of Knowledge. Here is no cloven foot, or horns and tail: he himself informs us that, during the late march of intellect, the very Devil has participated in the spirit of the age, and laid these appendages aside. Doubtless, Mephistopheles 'has the manners of a gentleman;' he 'knows the world;' nothing can exceed the easy tact with which he manages himself; his wit and sarcasm are unlimited; the cool heartfelt contempt with which he despises all things, human and divine, might make the fortune of half a dozen 'fellows about town.' Yet withal he is a devil in very deed; a genuine Son of Night. He calls himself the Denier, and this truly is his name; for, as Voltaire did with historical doubts, so does he with all moral appearances; settles them with a *N'en croyez rien.* The shrewd, all-informed intellect he has, is an attorney intellect; it can contradict, but it cannot affirm. With lynx vision, he descries at a glance the ridiculous, the unsuitable, the bad; but for the

solemn, the noble, the worthy, he is blind as his ancient Mother. Thus does he go along, qualifying, confuting, despising; on all hands detecting the false, but without force to bring forth, or even to discern, any glimpse of the true. Poor Devil! what truth should there be for him? To see Falsehood is his only Truth: falsehood and evil are the rule, truth and good the exception which confirms it. He can believe in nothing, but in his own self-conceit, and in the indestructible baseness, folly and hypocrisy of men. For him, virtue is some bubble of the blood: 'it stands written on his face that he never loved a living soul.' Nay, he cannot even hate: at Faust himself he has no grudge; he merely tempts him by way of experiment, and to pass the time scientifically. Such a combination of perfect Understanding with perfect Selfishness, of logical Life with moral Death; so universal a denier, both in heart and head, —is undoubtedly a child of Darkness, an emissary of the primeval Nothing: and coming forward, as he does, like a person of breeding, and without any flavour of brimstone, may stand here, in his merely spiritual deformity, at once potent, dangerous and contemptible, as the best and only genuine Devil of these latter times.

In strong contrast with this impersonation of modern worldly-mindedness stands Faust himself, by nature the antagonist of it, but destined also to be its victim. If Mephistopheles represent the spirit of Denial, Faust may represent that of Inquiry and Endeavour: the two are, by necessity, in conflict; the light and the darkness of man's life and mind. Intrinsically, Faust is a noble being, though no wise one. His desires are towards the high and true; nay with a whirlwind impetuosity he rushes forth over the Universe to grasp all excellence; his heart yearns towards the infinite and the invisible: only that he knows not the conditions under which alone this is to be attained. Confiding in his feeling of himself, he has started with the tacit persuasion, so natural to all men, that *he* at least, however it may fare with others, shall and must be *happy;* a deep-seated, though only half-conscious conviction lurks in him, that wherever he is not successful, fortune has dealt with him *unjustly*. His purposes are fair, nay generous: why should he not prosper in them? For in all his lofty aspirings, his strivings after truth and more than human greatness of mind, it has never struck him to inquire how he, the striver,

was warranted for such enterprises: with what faculty Nature had equipped him; within what limits she had hemmed him in; by what right *he* pretended to be happy, or could, some short space ago, have pretended to *be* at all. Experience, indeed, will teach him, for 'Experience is the best of schoolmasters; only the school-fees are heavy.' As yet too, disappointment, which fronts him on every hand, rather maddens than instructs. Faust has spent his youth and manhood, not as others do, in the sunny crowded paths of profit, or among the rosy bowers of pleasure, but darkly and alone in the search of Truth; is it fit that Truth should now hide herself, and his sleepless pilgrimage towards Knowledge and Vision end in the pale shadow of Doubt? To his dream of a glorious higher happiness, all earthly happiness has been sacrificed; friendship, love, the social rewards of ambition were cheerfully cast aside, for his eye and his heart were bent on a region of clear and supreme good; and now, in its stead, he finds isolation, silence and despair. What solace remains? Virtue once promised to be her own reward; but because she does not pay him in the current coin of worldly enjoyment, he reckons her too a delusion; and, like Brutus, reproaches as a shadow, what he once worshipped as a substance. Whither shall he now tend? For his loadstars have gone out one by one; and as the darkness fell, the strong steady wind has changed into a fierce and aimless tornado. Faust calls himself a monster, 'without object, yet without rest.' The vehement, keen and stormful nature of the man is stung into fury, as he thinks of all he has endured and lost; he broods in gloomy meditation, and, like Bellerophon, wanders apart, 'eating his own heart;' or, bursting into fiery paroxysms, curses man's whole existence as a mockery; curses hope and faith, and joy and care, and what is worst, 'curses patience more than all the rest.' Had his weak arm the power, he could smite the Universe asunder, as at the crack of Doom, and hurl his own vexed being along with it into the silence of Annihilation.

Thus Faust is a man who has quitted the ways of vulgar men, without light to guide him on a better way. No longer restricted by the sympathies, the common interests and common persuasions by which the mass of mortals, each individually ignorant, nay, it may be, stolid and altogether blind as to the proper aim of life, are yet held together, and, like stones in

the channel of a torrent, by their very multitude and mutual collision, are made to move with some regularity,—he is still but a slave; the slave of impulses, which are stronger, not truer or better, and the more unsafe that they are solitary. He sees the vulgar of mankind happy; but happy only in their baseness. Himself he feels to be peculiar; the victim of a strange, an unexampled destiny; not as other men, he is '*with* them, not *of* them.' There is misery here, nay, as Goethe has elsewhere wisely remarked, the beginning of madness itself. It is only in the sentiment of companionship that men feel safe and assured: to all doubts and mysterious 'questionings of destiny,' their sole satisfying answer is, *Others do and suffer the like.* Were it not for this, the dullest day-drudge of Mammon might think himself into unspeakable abysses of despair; for he too is 'fearfully and wonderfully made;' Infinitude and Incomprehensibility surround him on this hand and that; and the vague spectre Death, silent and sure as Time, is advancing at all moments to sweep him away for ever. But he answers, *Others do and suffer the like;* and plods along without misgivings. Were there but One Man in the world, he would be a terror to himself; and the highest man not less so than the lowest. Now it is as this One Man that Faust regards himself: he is divided from his fellows; cannot answer with them, *Others do the like;* and yet, why or how he specially is to *do* or *suffer*, will nowhere reveal itself. For he is still 'in the gall of bitterness;' Pride, and an entire uncompromising though secret love of Self, are still the mainsprings of his conduct. Knowledge with him is precious only because it is power; even virtue he would love chiefly as a finer sort of sensuality, and because it was *his* virtue. A ravenous hunger for enjoyment haunts him everywhere; the stinted allotments of earthly life are as a mockery to him: to the iron law of Force he will not yield, for his heart, though torn, is yet unweakened, and till Humility shall open his eyes, the soft law of Wisdom will be hidden from him.

To invest a man of this character with supernatural powers is but enabling him to repeat his error on a larger scale, to play the same false game with a deeper and more ruinous stake. Go where he may, he will 'find himself again in a conditional world;' widen his sphere as he pleases, he will find it again encircled by the empire of Necessity; the gay island

of Existence is again but a fraction of the ancient realm of Night. Were he all-wise and all-powerful, perhaps he might be contented and virtuous; scarcely otherwise. The poorest human soul is infinite in wishes, and the infinite Universe was not made for one, but for all. Vain were it for Faust, by heaping height on height, to struggle towards infinitude; while to that law of Self-denial, by which alone man's narrow destiny may become an infinitude within itself, he is still a stranger. Such, however, is his attempt; not indeed incited by hope, but goaded on by despair, he unites himself with the Fiend, as with a stronger though a wicked agency; reckless of all issues, if so were that, by these means, the craving of his heart might be stayed, and the dark secret of Destiny unravelled or forgotten.

It is this conflicting union of the higher nature of the soul with the lower elements of human life; of Faust, the son of Light and Free-will, with the influences of Doubt, Denial and Obstruction, or Mephistopheles, who is the symbol and spokesman of these, that the poet has here proposed to delineate. A high problem; and of which the solution is yet far from completed; nay perhaps, in a poetical sense, is not, strictly speaking, capable of completion. For it is to be remarked that, in this contract with the Prince of Darkness, little or no mention or allusion is made to a Future Life; whereby it might seem as if the action was not intended, in the manner of the old Legend, to terminate in Faust's perdition; but rather as if an altogether different end must be provided for him. Faust, indeed, wild and wilful as he is, cannot be regarded as a wicked, much less as an utterly reprobate man: we do not reckon him ill-intentioned, but misguided and miserable; he falls into crime, not by purpose, but by accident and blindness. To send him to the Pit of Woe, to render such a character the eternal slave of Mephistopheles, would look like making darkness triumphant over light, blind force over erring reason; or at best, were cutting the Gordian knot, not loosing it. If we mistake not, Goethe's *Faust* will have a finer moral than the old nursery-tale, or the other plays and tales that have been founded on it. Our seared and blighted yet still noble Faust will not end in the madness of horror, but in Peace grounded on better Knowledge. Whence that Knowledge is to come, what higher and freer world of Art or Religion may be hovering in the mind of

the Poet, we will not try to surmise; perhaps in bright aërial emblematic glimpses, he may yet show it us, transient and afar off, yet clear with orient beauty, as a Land of Wonders and new Poetic Heaven.

With regard to that part of the Work already finished, we must here say little more. *Faust*, as it yet stands, is, indeed, only a stating of the difficulty; but a stating of it wisely, truly and with deepest poetic emphasis. For how many living hearts, even now imprisoned in the perplexities of Doubt, do these wild piercing tones of Faust, his withering agonies and fiery desperation, 'speak the word they have long been waiting to hear'! A nameless pain had long brooded over the soul: here, by some light touch, it starts into form and voice; we see it and know it, and see that another also knew it. This *Faust* is as a mystic Oracle for the mind; a Dodona grove, where the oaks and fountains prophesy to us of our destiny, and murmur unearthly secrets.

How all this is managed, and the Poem so curiously fashioned; how the clearest insight is combined with the keenest feeling, and the boldest and wildest imagination; by what soft and skilful finishing these so heterogeneous elements are blended in fine harmony, and the dark world of spirits, with its merely metaphysical entities, plays like a chequering of strange mysterious shadows among the palpable objects of material life; and the whole, firm in its details and sharp and solid as reality, yet hangs before us melting on all sides into air, and free and light as the baseless fabric of a vision; all this the reader can learn fully nowhere but, by long study, in the Work itself. The general scope and spirit of it we have now endeavoured to sketch: the few incidents on which, with the aid of much dialogue and exposition, these have been brought out, are perhaps already known to most readers, and, at all events, need not be minutely recapitulated here. Mephistopheles has promised to himself that he will lead Faust 'through the bustling inanity of life,' but that its pleasures shall tempt and not satisfy him; 'food shall hover before his eager lips, but he shall beg for nourishment in vain.' Hitherto they have travelled but a short way together; yet so far, the Denier has kept his engagement well. Faust, endowed with all earthly and many more than earthly advantages, is still no nearer contentment; nay, after a brief season of marred and uncertain joy, he finds him-

self sunk into deeper wretchedness than ever. Margaret, an innocent girl whom he loves, but has betrayed, is doomed to die, and already crazed in brain, less for her own errors than for his: in a scene of true pathos, he would fain persuade her to escape with him, by the aid of Mephistopheles, from prison; but in the instinct of her heart she finds an invincible aversion to the Fiend: she chooses death and ignominy rather than life and love, if of his giving. At her final refusal, Mephistopheles proclaims that "she is judged," a 'voice from Above' that "she is saved;" the action terminates; Faust and Mephistopheles vanish from our sight, as into boundless Space.

And now, after so long a preface, we arrive at *Helena*, the 'Classico-romantic Phantasmagoria,' where these Adventurers, strangely altered by travel, and in altogether different costume, have again risen into sight. Our long preface was not needless; for *Faust* and *Helena*, though separated by some wide and marvellous interval, are nowise disconnected. The characters may have changed by absence; Faust is no longer the same bitter and tempestuous man, but appears in chivalrous composure, with a silent energy, a grave and, as it were, commanding ardour. Mephistopheles alone may retain somewhat of his old spiteful shrewdness: but still the past state of these personages must illustrate the present; and only by what we remember of them, can we try to interpret what we see. In fact, the style of *Helena* is altogether new; quiet, simple, joyful; passing by a short gradation from Classic dignity into Romantic pomp; it has everywhere a full and sunny tone of colouring; resembles not a tragedy, but a gay gorgeous masque. Neither is Faust's former history alluded to, or any explanation given us of occurrences that may have intervened. It is a light scene, divided by chasms and unknown distance from that other country of gloom. Nevertheless, the latter still frowns in the background; nay rises aloft, shutting out farther view, and our gay vision attains a new significance as it is painted on that canvas of storm.

We question whether it ever occurred to any English reader of *Faust*, that the work needed a continuation, or even admitted one. To the Germans, however, in their deeper study of a favourite poem, which also they have full means of studying, this has long been no secret; and such as have seen with

what zeal most German readers cherish *Faust*, and how the younger of them will recite whole scenes of it with a vehemence resembling that of Gil Blas and his *Figures Hibernoises*, in the streets of Oviedo, may estimate the interest excited in that country by the following Notice from the Author, published last year in his *Kunst und Alterthum*.

'*Helena. Interlude in Faust.*

'Faust's character, in the elevation to which latter refinement, working on the old rude Tradition, has raised it, represents a man who, feeling impatient and imprisoned within the limits of mere earthly existence, regards the possession of the highest knowledge, the enjoyment of the fairest blessings, as insufficient even in the slightest degree to satisfy his longing: a spirit, accordingly, which struggling out on all sides, ever returns the more unhappy.

'This form of mind is so accordant with our modern disposition, that various persons of ability have been induced to undertake the treatment of such a subject. My manner of attempting it obtained approval: distinguished men considered the matter, and commented on my performance; all which I thankfully observed. At the same time I could not but wonder that none of those who undertook a continuation and completion of my Fragment had lighted on the thought, which seemed so obvious, that the composition of a Second Part must necessarily elevate itself altogether away from the hampered sphere of the First, and conduct a man of such a nature into higher regions, under worthier circumstances.

'How I, for my part, had determined to essay this, lay silently before my own mind, from time to time exciting me to some progress; while from all and each I carefully guarded my secret, still in hope of bringing the work to the wished-for issue. Now, however, I must no longer keep back; or, in publishing my collective Endeavours, conceal any farther secret from the world; to which, on the contrary, I feel myself bound to submit my whole labours, even though in a fragmentary state.

'Accordingly I have resolved that the above-named Piece, a smaller drama, complete within itself, but pertaining to the Second Part of *Faust*, shall be forthwith presented in the First Portion of my Works.

'The wide chasm between that well-known dolorous conclusion of the First Part, and the entrance of an antique Grecian Heroine, is not yet overarched; meanwhile, as a preamble, my readers will accept what follows:

'The old Legend tells us, and the Puppet-play fails not to introduce the scene, that Faust, in his imperious pride of heart, required from Mephistopheles the love of the fair Helena of Greece; in which demand the other, after some reluctance, gratified him. Not to overlook so important a concern in our work was a duty for us: and how we have en-

deavoured to discharge it, will be seen in this Interlude. But what may have furnished the proximate occasion of such an occurrence, and how, after manifold hindrances, our old magical Craftsman can have found means to bring back the individual Helena, in person, out of Orcus into Life, must, in this stage of the business, remain undiscovered. For the present, it is enough if our reader will admit that the real Helena may step forth, on antique tragedy-cothurnus, before her primitive abode in Sparta. We then request him to observe in what way and manner Faust will presume to court favour from this royal all-famous Beauty of the world.'

To manage so unexampled a courtship will be admitted to be no easy task; for the mad hero's prayer must here be fulfilled to its largest extent, before the business can proceed a step; and the gods, it is certain, are not in the habit of annihilating time and space, even to make 'two lovers happy.' Our Marlowe was not ignorant of this mysterious *liaison* of Faust's: however, he slurs it over briefly, and without fronting the difficulty: Helena merely flits across the scene as an airy pageant, without speech or personality, and makes the lovesick philosopher 'immortal by a kiss.' Probably there are not many that would grudge Faust such immortality; we at least nowise envy him: for who does not see that this, in all human probability, is no real Helena, but only some hollow phantasm attired in her shape; while the true Daughter of Leda still dwells afar off in the inane kingdoms of Dis, and heeds not and hears not the most potent invocations of black art? Another matter it is to call forth the frail fair one in very deed; not in form only, but in soul and life, the *same* Helena whom the Son of Atreus wedded, and for whose sake Ilion ceased to be. For Faust must behold this Wonder, not as she seemed, but as she was; and at his unearthly desire the Past shall become Present; and the antique Time must be new-created, and give back its persons and circumstances, though so long since reingulfed in the silence of the blank bygone Eternity! However, Mephistopheles is a cunning genius; and will not start at common obstacles. Perhaps, indeed, he is Metaphysician enough to know that Time and Space are but quiddities, not entities; *forms* of the human soul, Laws of Thought, which to us appear independent existences, but, out of our brain, have no existence whatever: in which case the whole nodus may be more of a logical cobweb than any actual material perplexity. Let us see how he unravels it, or cuts it.

The scene is Greece; not our poor oppressed Ottoman Morea, but the old heroic Hellas; for the sun again shines on Sparta, and 'Tyndarus' high House' stands here bright, massive and entire, among its mountains, as when Menelaus revisited it, wearied with his ten years of warfare and eight of sea-roving. Helena appears in front of the Palace, with a Chorus of captive Trojan maidens. These are but Shades, we know, summoned from the deep realms of Hades, and embodied for the nonce: but the Conjuror has so managed it, that they themselves have no consciousness of this their true and highly precarious state of existence: the intermediate three thousand years have been obliterated, or compressed into a point; and these fair figures, on revisiting the upper air, entertain not the slightest suspicion that they had ever left it, or, indeed, that anything special had happened; save only that they had just disembarked from the Spartan ships, and been sent forward by Menelaus to provide for his reception, which is shortly to follow. All these indispensable preliminaries, it would appear, Mephistopheles has arranged with considerable success. Of the poor Shades, and their entire ignorance, he is so sure, that he would not scruple to cross-question them on this very point, so ticklish for his whole enterprise; nay, cannot forbear, now and then, throwing out malicious hints to mystify Helena herself, and raise the strangest doubts as to her personal identity. Thus on one occasion, as we shall see, he reminds her of a scandal which had gone abroad of her being a *double* personage, of her living with King Proteus in Egypt at the very time when she lived with Beau Paris in Troy; and, what is more extraordinary still, of her having been dead, and married to Achilles afterwards in the Island of Leuce! Helena admits that it is the most inexplicable thing on earth; can only conjecture that 'she a Vision was joined to him a Vision;' and then sinks into a reverie or swoon in the arms of the Chorus. In this way can the nether-world Scapin sport with the perplexed Beauty; and by sly practice make her show us the secret, which is unknown to herself!

For the present, however, there is no thought of such scruples. Helena and her maidens, far from doubting that they are real authentic denizens of this world, feel themselves in a deep embarrassment about its concerns. From the dialogue, in long Alexandrines, or choral Recitative, we soon gather that

matters wear a threatening aspect. Helena salutes her paternal and nuptial mansion in such style as may beseem an erring wife, returned from so eventful an elopement; alludes with charitable lenience to her frailty; which, indeed, it would seem, was nothing but the merest accident, for she had simply gone to pay her vows, 'according to sacred wont,' in the temple of Cytherea, when the 'Phrygian robber' seized her; and farther informs us that the Immortals still foreshow to her a dubious future:

> For seldom, in our swift ship, did my husband deign
> To look on me; and word of comfort spake he none.
> As if a-brooding mischief, there he silent sat;
> Until, when steered into Eurotas' bending bay,
> The first ships with their prows but kissed the land,
> He rose, and said, as by the voice of gods inspired:
> Here will I that my warriors, troop by troop, disbark;
> I muster them, in battle-order, on the ocean-strand.
> But thou, go forward, up Eurotas' sacred bank,
> Guiding the steeds along the flower-besprinkled space,
> Till thou arrive on the fair plain where Lacedæmon,
> Erewhile a broad fruit-bearing field, has piled its roofs
> Amid the mountains, and sends up the smoke of hearths.
> Then enter thou the high-towered Palace; call the Maids
> I left at parting, and the wise old Stewardess:
> With her inspect the Treasures which thy father left,
> And I, in war or peace still adding, have heaped up.
> Thou findest all in order standing; for it is
> The prince's privilege to see, at his return,
> Each household item as it was, and where it was;
> For of himself the slave hath power to alter nought.

It appears, moreover, that Menelaus has given her directions to prepare for a solemn Sacrifice: the ewers, the pateras, the altar, the axe, dry wood, are all to be in readiness; only of the victim there was no mention; a circumstance from which Helena fails not to draw some rather alarming surmises. However, reflecting that all issues rest with the higher Powers, and that, in any case, irresolution and procrastination will avail her nothing, she at length determines on this grand enterprise of entering the palace, to make a general review; and enters accordingly. But long before any such business could have been finished, she hastily returns, with a frustrated, nay terrified aspect; much to the astonishment of her Chorus, who pressingly inquire the cause.

HELENA, *who has left the door-leaves open, agitated.*

Beseems not that Jove's daughter shrink with common fright,
Nor by the brief cold touch of Fear be chilled and stunned.
Yet the Horror, which ascending, in the womb of Night,
From deeps of Chaos, rolls itself together many-shaped,
Like glowing Clouds, from out the mountain's fire-throat,
In threatening ghastliness, may shake even heroes' hearts.
So have the Stygian here today appointed me
A welcome to my native Mansion, such that fain
From the oft-trod, long-wished-for threshold, like a guest
That has took leave, I would withdraw my steps for aye.
But no! Retreated have I to the light, nor shall
Ye farther force me, angry Powers, be who ye may.
New expiations will I use; then purified,
The blaze of the Hearth may greet the Mistress as the Lord.

PANTHALIS THE CHORAGE.[4]

Discover, noble queen, to us thy handmaidens,
That wait by thee in love, what misery has befallen.

HELENA.

What I have seen, ye too with your own eyes shall see,
If Night have not already suck'd her Phantoms back
To the Abysses of her wonder-bearing breast.
Yet, would ye know this thing, I tell it you in words.
When bent on present duty, yet with anxious thought,
I solemnly set foot in these high royal Halls,
The silent, vacant passages astounded me;
For tread of hasty footsteps nowhere met the ear,
Nor bustle as of busy menial-work the eye.
No maid comes forth to me, no Stewardess, such as
Still wont with friendly welcome to salute all guests.
But as, alone advancing, I approach the Hearth,
There, by the ashy remnant of dim outburnt coals,
Sits, crouching on the ground, up-muffled, some huge Crone,
Not as in sleep she sat, but as in drowsy muse.
With ordering voice I bid her rise; nought doubting 'twas
The Stewardess the King, at parting hence, had left.
But, heedless, shrunk together, sits she motionless;
And as I chid, at last outstretch'd her lean right arm,
As if she beckoned me from hall and hearth away.
I turn indignant from her, and hasten out forthwith
Towards the steps whereon aloft the Thalamos
Adorned rises; and near by it the Treasure-room;

[4] Leader of the Chorus.

When, lo, the Wonder starts abruptly from the floor;
Imperious, barring my advance, displays herself
In haggard stature, hollow bloodshot eyes; a shape
Of hideous strangeness, to perplex all sight and thought.
But I discourse to the air: for words in vain attempt
To body forth to sight the form that dwells in us.
There see herself! She ventures forward to the light!
Here we are masters till our Lord and King shall come.
The ghastly births of Night, Apollo, beauty's friend,
Disperses back to their abysses, or subdues.

PHORCYAS *enters on the threshold, between the door-posts.*

CHORUS.

Much have I seen, and strange, though the ringlets
Youthful and thick still wave round my temples:
Terrors a many, war and its horrors
Witnessed I once in Ilion's night,
When it fell.
Thorough the clanging, cloudy-covered din of
Onrushing warriors, heard I th' Immortals
Shouting in anger, heard I Bellona's
Iron-toned voice resound from without
City-wards.

Ah! the City yet stood, with its
Bulwarks; Ilion safely yet
Towered: but spreading from house over
House, the flame did begirdle us;
Sea-like, red, loud and billowy;
Hither, thither, as tempest-floods,
Over the death-circled City.

Flying, saw I, through heat and through
Gloom and glare of that fire-ocean,
Shapes of Gods in their wrathfulness,
Stalking grim, fierce and terrible,
Giant-high, through the luridly
Flame-dyed dusk of that vapour.

Did I see it, or was it but
Terror of heart that fashioned
Forms so affrighting? Know can I
Never: but here that I view this
Horrible Thing with my own eyes,
This of a surety believe I:
Yea, I could clutch 't in my fingers,
Did not, from Shape so dangerous,
Fear at a distance keep me.

Which of old Phorcys'
Daughters then art thou?
For I compare thee to
That generation.
Art thou belike of the Graiæ,
Gray-born, one eye and one tooth
Using alternate,
Child or descendant?

Darest thou, Haggard,
Close by such beauty,
'Fore the divine glance of
Phœbus display thee?
But display as it pleases thee;
For the ugly he heedeth not,
As his bright eye yet never did
Look on a shadow.

But us mortals, alas for it!
Law of Destiny burdens us
With the unspeakable eye-sorrow
Which such a sight, unblessed, detestable,
Doth in lovers of beauty awaken.

Nay then, hear, since thou shamelessly
Com'st forth fronting us, hear only
Curses, hear all manner of threatenings,
Out of the scornful lips of the happier
That were made by the Deities.

PHORCYAS.

Old is the saw, but high and true remains its sense,
That Shame and Beauty ne'er, together hand in hand,
Were seen pursue their journey over the earth's green path.
Deep-rooted dwells an ancient hatred in these two;
So that wherever, on their way, one haps to meet
The other, each on its adversary turns its back;
Then hastens forth the faster on its separate road;
Shame all in sorrow, Beauty pert and light of mood;
Till the hollow night of Orcus catches it at length,
If age and wrinkles have not tamed it long before.
So you, ye wantons, wafted hither from strange lands,
I find in tumult, like the cranes' hoarse jingling flight,
That over our heads, in long-drawn cloud, sends down
Its creaking gabble, and tempts the silent wanderer that he look
Aloft at them a moment: but they go their way,
And he goes his; so also will it be with us.

Who then are ye, that here, in Bacchanalian wise,
Like drunk ones, ye dare uproar at this Palace-gate?

Who then are ye, that at the Stewardess of the King's House
Ye howl, as at the moon the crabbed brood of dogs?
Think ye 'tis hid from me what manner of thing ye are?
Ye war-begotten, fight-bred, feather-headed crew!
Lascivious crew, seducing as seduced, that waste,
In rioting, alike the soldier's and the burgher's strength!
Here seeing you gathered, seems as a cicada-swarm
Had lighted, covering the herbage of the fields.
Consumers ye of other's thrift, ye greedy-mouthed
Quick squanderers of fruits men gain by tedious toil;
Cracked market-ware, stol'n, bought, and bartered troop of slaves!

We have thought it right to give so much of these singular expositions and altercations, in the words, as far as might be, of the parties themselves; happy could we, in any measure, have transfused the broad, yet rich and chaste simplicity of these long iambics; or imitated the tone, as we have done the metre, of that choral song; its rude earnestness, and tortuous, awkward-looking, artless strength, as we have done its dactyls and anapæsts. The task was no easy one; and we remain, as might have been expected, little contented with our efforts; having, indeed, nothing to boast of, except a sincere fidelity to the original. If the reader, through such distortion, can obtain any glimpse of *Helena* itself, he will not only pardon us, but thank us. To our own minds, at least, there is everywhere a strange, piquant, quite peculiar charm in these imitations of the old Grecian style: a dash of the ridiculous, if we might say so, is blended with the sublime, yet blended with it softly, and only to temper its austerity; for often, so graphic is the delineation, we could almost feel as if a vista were opened through the long gloomy distance of ages, and we, with our modern eyes and modern levity, beheld afar off, in clear light, the very figures of that old grave time; saw them again living in their old antiquarian costume and environment, and heard them audibly discourse in a dialect which had long been dead.

Of all this no man is more master than Goethe: as a modern-antique, his *Iphigenie* must be considered unrivalled in poetry. A similar thoroughly classical spirit will be found in this First Part of *Helena;* yet the manner of the two pieces is essentially different. Here, we should say, we are more reminded of Sophocles, perhaps of Æschylus, than of Euripides: it is more rugged, copious, energetic, inartificial; a still more

ancient style. How very primitive, for instance, are Helena and Phorcyas in their whole deportment here! How frank and downright in speech; above all, how minute and specific; no glimpse of 'philosophical culture;' no such thing as a 'general idea;' thus, every different object seems a new unknown one, and requires to be separately stated. In like manner, what can be more honest and edifying than the chant of the Chorus? With what inimitable *naïveté* they recur to the sack of Troy, and endeavour to convince themselves that they do actually see this 'horrible Thing;' then lament the law of Destiny which dooms them to such 'unspeakable eye-sorrow;' and, finally, break forth into sheer cursing; to all which Phorcyas answers in the like free and plain-spoken fashion.

But to our story. This hard-tempered and so dreadfully ugly old lady, the reader cannot help suspecting, at first sight, to be some cousin-german of Mephistopheles, or indeed that great Actor of all Work himself; which latter suspicion the devilish nature of the beldame, by degrees, confirms into a moral certainty. There is a sarcastic malice in the 'wise old Stewardess' which cannot be mistaken. Meanwhile the Chorus and the beldame indulge still farther in mutual abuse; she upbraiding them with their giddiness and wanton disposition; they chanting unabatedly her extreme deficiency in personal charms. Helena, however, interposes; and the old Gorgon, pretending that she has not till now recognised the stranger to be her Mistress, smooths herself into gentleness, affects the greatest humility, and even appeals to her for protection against the insolence of these young ones. But wicked Phorcyas is only waiting her opportunity; still neither unwilling to wound, nor afraid to strike. Helena, to expel some unpleasant vapours of doubt, is reviewing her past history, in concert with Phorcyas; and observes, that the latter had been appointed Stewardess by Menelaus, on his return from his Cretan expedition to Sparta. No sooner is Sparta mentioned, than the crone, with an officious air of helping-out the story, adds:

> Which thou forsookest, Ilion's tower-encircled town
> Preferring, and the unexhausted joys of Love.

HELENA.

> Remind me not of joys; an all-too heavy woe's
> Infinitude soon followed, crushing breast and heart.

PHORCYAS.

But I have heard thou livest on earth a double life;
In Ilion seen, and seen the while in Egypt too.

HELENA.

Confound not so the weakness of my weary sense:
Here even, who or what I am, I know it not.

PHORCYAS.

Then I have heard how, from the hollow Realm of Shades,
Achilles too did fervently unite himself to thee;
Thy earlier love reclaiming, spite of all Fate's laws.

HELENA.

To him the Vision, I a Vision joined myself:
It was a dream, the very words may teach us this.
But I am faint; and to myself a Vision grow.
[*Sinks into the arms of one division of the Chorus.*

CHORUS.

Silence! silence!
Evil-eyed, evil-tongued, thou!
Through so shrivelled-up, one-tooth'd a
Mouth, what good can come from that
Throat of horrors detestable—

—In which style they continue musically rating her, till 'Helena has recovered, and again stands in the middle of the chorus;' when Phorcyas, with the most wheedling air, hastens to greet her, in a new sort of verse, as if nothing whatever had happened:

PHORCYAS.

Issues forth from passing cloud the sun of this bright day:
If when veil'd she so could charm us, now her beams in splendour blind.
As the world doth look before thee, in such gentle wise thou look'st.
Let them call me so unlovely, what is lovely know I well.

HELENA.

Come so wavering from the Void which in that faintness circled me,
Glad I were to rest again a space; so weary are my limbs.
Yet it well becometh queens, all mortals it becometh well,
To possess their hearts in patience, and await what can betide.

PHORCYAS.

Whilst thou standest in thy greatness, in thy beauty here,
Says thy look that thou commandest: what command'st thou? Speak it out.

HELENA.

To conclude your quarrel's idle loitering be prepared:
Haste, arrange the Sacrifice the King commanded me.

PHORCYAS.

All is ready in the Palace, bowl and tripod, sharp-ground axe;
For besprinkling, for befuming: now the Victim let us see.

HELENA.

This the King appointed not.

PHORCYAS.

Spoke not of this? O word of woe!

HELENA.

What strange sorrow overpowers thee?

PHORCYAS.

Queen, 'tis thou he meant.

HELENA.

I?

PHORCYAS.

And these.

CHORUS.

O woe! O woe!

PHORCYAS.

Thou fallest by the axe's stroke.

HELENA.

Horrible, yet look'd for: hapless I!

PHORCYAS.

Inevitable seems it me.

CHORUS.

Ah, and us? What will become of us?

PHORCYAS.

She dies a noble death:
Ye, on the high Beam within that bears the rafters and the roof,
As in birding-time so many woodlarks, in a row, shall sprawl.

[*Helena and Chorus stand astounded and terrorstruck; in expressive, well-concerted grouping.*

Poor spectres!—All like frozen statues there ye stand,
In fright to leave the Day which not belongs to you.
No man or spectre, more than you, is fond to quit

The Upper Light; yet rescue, respite finds not one:
All know it, all believe it, few delight in it.
Enough, 'tis over with you! And so let's to work.

How the cursed old beldame enjoys the agony of these poor Shades; nay, we suspect, she is laughing in her sleeve at the very Classicism of this Drama, which she herself has contrived, and is even now helping to enact! Observe, she has quitted her octameter trochaics again, and taken to plain blank verse; a sign, perhaps, that she is getting weary of the whole Classical concern! But however this may be, she now claps her hands; whereupon certain distorted dwarf figures appear at the door, and, with great speed and agility, at her order, bring forth the sacrificial apparatus; on which she fails not to descant demonstratively, explaining the purpose of the several articles as they are successively fitted up before her. Here is the 'gold-horned altar,' the 'axe glittering over its silver edge;' then there must be 'water-urns to wash the black blood's defilement,' and a 'precious mat' to kneel on, for the victim is to be beheaded queenlike. On all hands, mortal horror! But Phorcyas hints darkly that there is still a way of escape left; this, of course, every one is in deepest eagerness to learn. Here, one would think, she might for once come to the point without digression: but Phorcyas has her own way of stating a fact. She thus commences:

PHORCYAS.

Whoso, collecting store of wealth, at home abides
To parget in due season his high dwelling's walls,
And prudent guard his roof from inroad of the rain,
With him, through long still years of life, it shall be well.
But he who lightly, in his folly, bent to rove,
O'ersteps with wand'ring foot his threshold's sacred line,
Will find, at his return, the ancient place indeed
Still there, but else all alter'd, if not overthrown.

HELENA.

Why these trite saws? Thou wert to teach us, not reprove.

PHORCYAS.

Historical it is, is nowise a reproof.
Sea-roving, steer'd King Menelaus brisk from bay to bay;
Descended on all ports and isles, a plundering foe,
And still came back with booty, which yet moulders here.
Then by the walls of Ilion spent he ten long years;

How many in his homeward voyage were hard to know.
But all this while how stands it here with Tyndarus'
High house? How stands it with his own domains around?

HELENA.

Is love of railing, then, so interwoven with thee,
That thus, except to chide, thou canst not move thy lips?

PHORCYAS.

So many years forsaken stood the mountain glen,
Which, north from Sparta, towards the higher land ascends
Behind Taÿgetus; where, as yet a merry brook,
Eurotas gurgles on, and then, along our Vale,
In sep'rate streams abroad outflowing feeds your Swans.
There, backwards in the rocky hills, a daring race
Have fix'd themselves, forth issuing from Cimmerian Night;
An inexpugnable stronghold have piled aloft,
From which they harry land and people as they please.

HELENA.

How could they? All impossible it seems to me.

PHORCYAS.

Enough of time they had: 'tis haply twenty years.

HELENA.

Is One the Master? Are there Robbers many; leagued?

PHORCYAS.

Not Robbers these: yet many, and the Master One.
Of him I say no ill, though hither too he came.
What might not he have took? yet did content himself
With some small Present, so he called it, Tribute not.

HELENA.

How looks he?

PHORCYAS.

Nowise ill! To me he pleasant look'd.
A jocund, gallant, hardy, handsome man it is,
And rational in speech, as of the Greeks are few.
We call the folk Barbarian; yet I question much
If one there be so cruel, as at Ilion
Full many of our best heroes man-devouring were.
I do respect his greatness, and confide in him.
And for his Tower! this with your own eyes ye should see:
Another thing it is than clumsy boulder-work,
Such as our Fathers, nothing scrupling, huddled up,

Cyclopean, and like Cyclops-builders, one rude crag
On other rude crags tumbling: in that Tow'r of theirs
'Tis plumb and level all, and done by square and rule.
Look on it from without! Heav'nward it soars on high,
So straight, so tight of joint, and mirror-smooth as steel:
To clamber there—Nay, even your very Thought slides down,—
And then, within, such courts, broad spaces, all around,
With masonry encompass'd of every sort and use:
There have ye arches, archlets, pillars, pillarlets,
Balconies, galleries, for looking out and in,
And coats of arms.

CHORUS.

Of arms? What mean'st thou?

PHORCYAS.

Ajax bore
A twisted Snake on his Shield, as ye yourselves have seen.
The Seven also before Thebes bore carved work
Each on his Shield; devices rich and full of sense:
There saw ye moon and stars of the nightly heaven's vault,
And goddesses, and heroes, ladders, torches, swords,
And dangerous tools, such as in storm o'erfall good towns.
Escutcheons of like sort our heroes also bear:
There see ye lions, eagles, claws besides, and bills,
Then buffalo-horns, and wings, and roses, peacock-tails;
And bandelets, gold and black and silver, blue and red.
Suchlike are there hung up in Halls, row after row;
In halls, so large, so lofty, boundless as the World;
There might ye dance!

CHORUS.

Ha! Tell us, are there dancers there?

PHORCYAS.

The best on earth! A golden-hair'd, fresh, younker band,
They breathe of youth; Paris alone so breath'd when to
Our Queen he came too near.

HELENA.

Thou quite dost lose
The tenor of thy story: say me thy last word.

PHORCYAS.

Thyself wilt say it: say in earnest, audibly, Yes!
Next moment, I surround thee with that Tow'r.

The step is questionable: for is not this Phorcyas a person of the most suspicious character; or rather, is it not certain

that she is a Turk in grain, and will, almost of a surety, go how it may, turn good into bad? And yet, what is to be done? A trumpet, said to be that of Menelaus, sounds in the distance; at which the Chorus shrink together in increased terror. Phorcyas coldly reminds them of Deiphobus with his slit nose, as a small token of Menelaus' turn of thinking on these matters; supposes, however, that there is now nothing for it but to wait the issue, and die with propriety. Helena has no wish to die, either with propriety or impropriety; she pronounces, though with a faltering resolve, the definitive Yes. A burst of joy breaks from the Chorus; thick fog rises all round; in the midst of which, as we learn from their wild tremulous chant, they feel themselves hurried through the air: Eurotas is swept from sight, and the cry of its Swans fades ominously away in the distance; for now, as we suppose, 'Tyndarus' high House,' with all its appendages, is rushing back into the depths of the Past; old *Lacedæmon* has again become new *Misitra;* only Taÿgetus, with another name, remains unchanged: and the King of Rivers feeds among his sedges quite a different race of Swans from those of Leda! The mist is passing away, but yet, to the horror of the Chorus, no clear daylight returns. Dim masses rise round them: Phorcyas has vanished. Is it a castle? Is it a cavern? They find themselves in the 'Interior Court of the Tower, surrounded with rich fantastic buildings of the Middle Ages!'

If, hitherto, we have moved along, with considerable convenience, over ground singular enough indeed, yet, the nature of it once understood, affording firm footing and no unpleasant scenery, we come now to a strange mixed element, in which it seems as if neither walking, swimming, nor even flying, could rightly avail us. We have cheerfully admitted, and honestly believed, that Helena and her Chorus were Shades; but now they appear to be changing into mere Ideas, mere Metaphors, or poetic Thoughts! Faust too—for *he*, as every one sees, must be lord of this Fortress—is a much-altered man since we last met him. Nay sometimes we could fancy he were only *acting a part* on this occasion; were a mere mummer, representing not so much his own natural *personality*, as some shadow and impersonation of his *history;* not so much his own Faustship, as the Tradition of Faust's adventures, and the

Genius of the People among whom this took its rise. For, indeed, he has strange gifts of flying through the air, and living, in apparent friendship and contentment, with mere Eidolons; and, being excessively reserved withal, he becomes not a little enigmatic. In fact, our whole 'Interlude' changes its character at this point: the Greek style passes abruptly into the Spanish; at one bound we have left the *Seven before Thebes*, and got into the *Vida es Sueño*. The action, too, becomes more and more typical; or rather, we should say, half-typical; for it will neither hold rightly together as allegory nor as matter of fact.

Thus do we see ourselves hesitating on the verge of a wondrous region, 'neither sea nor good dry land;' full of shapes and musical tones, but all dim, fluctuating, unsubstantial, chaotic. Danger there is that the critic may require 'both oar and sail;' nay, it will be well if, like that other great Traveller, he meet not some vast vacuity, where, all unawares,

> Fluttering his pennons vain, plumb down he drop
> Ten thousand fathom deep . . . .

and so keep falling till

> The strong rebuff of some tumultuous cloud,
> Instinct with fire and nitre, hurry him
> As many miles aloft . . . .

—Meaning, probably, that he is to be 'blown-up' by nonplused and justly exasperated Review-reviewers!—Nevertheless, unappalled by these possibilities, we venture forward into this impalpable Limbo; and must endeavour to render such account of the 'sensible species' and 'ghosts of defunct bodies' we may meet there, as shall be moderately satisfactory to the reader.

In the little Notice from the Author, quoted above, we were bid specially observe in what way and manner Faust would presume to court this World-beauty. We must say, his style of gallantry seems to us of the most chivalrous and high-flown description, if indeed it is not a little *euphuistic*. In their own eyes, Helena and her Chorus, encircled in this Gothic court, appear, for some minutes, no better than captives; but, suddenly issuing from galleries and portals, and descending the stairs in stately procession, are seen a numerous suite of Pages, whose gay habiliments and red downy cheeks are greatly admired by the Chorus: these bear with them a throne and

canopy, with footstools and cushions, and every other necessary apparatus of royalty; the portable machine, as we gather from the Chorus, is soon put together; and Helena, being reverently beckoned into the same, is thus forthwith constituted Sovereign of the whole Establishment. To herself such royalty still seems a little dubious; but no sooner have the Pages, in long train, fairly descended, than 'Faust appears above, on the 'stairs, in knightly court-dress of the Middle Ages, and with 'deliberate dignity comes down,' astonishing the poor 'feather-headed' Chorus with the gracefulness of his deportment and his more than human beauty. He leads with him a culprit in fetters; and, by way of introduction, explains to Helena that this man, Lynceus, has deserved death by his misconduct; but that to her, as Queen of the Castle, must appertain the right of dooming or of pardoning him. The crime of Lynceus is, indeed, of an extraordinary nature: he was Warder of the tower; but now, though gifted, as his name imports, with the keenest vision, he has failed in warning Faust that so august a visitor was approaching, and thus occasioned the most dreadful breach of politeness. Lynceus pleads guilty: quick-sighted as a lynx, in usual cases, he has been blinded with excess of light, in this instance. While looking towards the orient at the 'course of morning,' he noticed a 'sun rise wonderfully in the south,' and, all his senses taken captive by such surprising beauty, he no longer knew his right hand from his left, or could move a limb, or utter a word, to announce her arrival. Under these peculiar circumstances, Helena sees room for extending the royal prerogative; and after expressing unfeigned regret at this so fatal influence of her charms over the whole male sex, dismisses the Warder with a reprieve. We must beg our readers to keep an eye on this Innamorato; for there may be meaning in him. Here is the pleading, which produced so fine an effect, given in his own words:

> Let me kneel and let me view her,
> Let me live, or let me die,
> Slave to this high woman, truer
> Than a bondsman born, am I.
>
> Watching o'er the course of morning,
> Eastward, as I mark it run,
> Rose there, all the sky adorning,
> Strangely in the south a sun.

Draws my look towards those places,
Not the valley, not the height,
Not the earth's or heaven's spaces;
She alone the queen of light.

Eyesight truly hath been lent me,
Like the lynx on highest tree;
Boots not; for amaze hath shent me:
Do I dream, or do I see?

Knew I aught; or could I ever
Think of tow'r or bolted gate?
Vapours waver, vapours sever,
Such a goddess comes in state!

Eye and heart I must surrender
Drown'd as in a radiant sea;
That high creature with her splendour
Blinding all hath blinded me.

I forgot the warder's duty;
Trumpet, challenge, word of call:
Chain me, threaten: sure this Beauty
Stills thy anger, saves her thrall.

Save him accordingly she did: but no sooner is he dismissed, and Faust has made a remark on the multitude of 'arrows' which she is darting forth on all sides, than Lynceus returns in a still madder humour. 'Reënter Lynceus with a Chest, and Men carrying other Chests behind him.'

LYNCEUS.

Thou see'st me, Queen, again advance.
The wealthy begs of thee one glance;
He look'd at thee, and feels e'er since
As beggar poor, and rich as prince.

What was I erst? What am I grown?
What have I meant, or done, or known?
What boots the sharpest force of eyes?
Back from thy throne it baffled flies.

From Eastward marching came we on,
And soon the West was lost and won:
A long broad army forth we pass'd,
The foremost knew not of the last.

The first did fall, the second stood,
The third hew'd-in with falchion good;
And still the next had prowess more,
Forgot the thousands slain before.

We stormed along, we rushed apace,
The masters we from place to place;
And where I lordly ruled today,
Tomorrow another did rob and slay.

We look'd; our choice was quickly made;
This snatch'd with him the fairest maid,
That seized the steer for burden bent,
The horses all and sundry went.

But I did love apart to spy
The rarest things could meet the eye:
Whate'er in others' hands I saw,
That was for me but chaff and straw.

For treasures did I keep a look,
My keen eyes pierc'd to every nook;
Into all pockets I could see,
Transparent each strong-box to me.

And heaps of Gold I gained this way,
And precious Stones of clearest ray:—
Now where's the Diamond meet to shine?
'Tis meet alone for breast like thine.

So let the Pearl from depths of sea,
In curious stringlets wave on thee:
The Ruby for some covert seeks,
'Tis paled by redness of thy cheeks.

And so the richest treasure's brought
Before thy throne, as best it ought;
Beneath thy feet here let me lay
The fruit of many a bloody fray.

So many chests we now do bear;
More chests I have, and finer ware:
Think me but to be near thee worth,
Whole treasure-vaults I empty forth.

For scarcely art thou hither sent,
All hearts and wills to thee are bent;
Our riches, reason, strength we must
Before the loveliest lay as dust.

All this I reckon'd great, and mine,
Now small I reckon it, and thine.
I thought it worthy, high and good;
'Tis nought, poor and misunderstood.

So dwindles what my glory was,
A heap of mown and withered grass:
What worth it had, and now does lack,
O, with one kind look, give it back!

FAUST.

Away! away! take back the bold-earn'd load,
Not blam'd indeed, but also not rewarded.
Hers is already whatsoe'er our Tower
Of costliness conceals. Go heap me treasures
On treasures, yet with order: let the blaze
Of pomp unspeakable appear; the ceilings
Gem-fretted, shine like skies; a Paradise
Of lifeless life create. Before her feet
Unfolding quick, let flow'ry carpet roll
Itself from flow'ry carpet, that her step
May light on softness, and her eye meet nought
But splendour blinding only not the Gods.

LYNCEUS.

Small is what our Lord doth say;
Servants do it; 'tis but play:
For o'er all we do or dream
Will this Beauty reign supreme.
Is not all our host grown tame?
Every sword is blunt and lame.
To a form of such a mould
Sun himself is dull and cold
To the richness of that face,
What is beauty, what is grace,
Loveliness we saw or thought?
All is empty, all is nought.

And herewith *exit* Lynceus, and we see no more of him! We have said that we thought there might be method in this madness. In fact, the allegorical, or at least fantastic and figurative, character of the whole action is growing more and more decided every moment. Helena, we must conjecture, is, in the course of this her real historical intrigue with Faust, to present, at the same time, some dim adumbration of Grecian Art, and its flight to the Northern Nations, when driven by stress of War from its own country. Faust's Tower will, in this case, afford not only a convenient station for *lifting blackmail* over the neighbouring district, but a cunning, though vague and

fluctuating, emblem of the Product of Teutonic Mind; the Science, Art, Institutions of the Northmen, of whose Spirit and Genius he himself may in some degree become the representative. In this way the extravagant homage and admiration paid to Helena are not without their meaning. The manner of her arrival, enveloped as she was in thick clouds, and frightened onwards by hostile trumpets, may also have more or less propriety. And who is Lynceus, the mad Watchman? We cannot but suspect him of being a Schoolman Philosopher, or School Philosophy itself, in disguise; and that this wonderful 'march' of his has a covert allusion to the great 'march of intellect,' which did march in those old ages, though only 'at ordinary time.' We observe, the military, one after the other, all fell; for discoverers, like other men, must die; but 'still the next had prowess more,' and forgot the thousands that had sunk in clearing the way for him. However, Lynceus, in his love of plunder, did not take 'the fairest maid,' nor 'the steer' fit for burden, but rather jewels and other rare articles of value; in which quest his high power of eyesight proved of great service to him. Better had it been, perhaps, to have done as others did, and seized 'the fairest maid,' or even the 'steer' fit for burden, or one of the 'horses' which were in such request: for, when he quitted practical Science and the philosophy of Life, and addicted himself to curious subtleties and Metaphysical crotchets, what did it avail him? At the first glance of the Grecian beauty, he found that it was 'nought, poor and misunderstood.' His extraordinary obscuration of vision on Helena's approach; his narrow escape from death, on that account, at the hands of Faust; his pardon by the fair Greek; his subsequent magnanimous offer to her, and discourse with his master on the subject,—might give rise to various considerations. But we must not loiter, questioning the strange Shadows of that strange country, who, besides, are apt to mystify one. Our nearest business is to get across it: we again proceed.

Whoever or whatever Faust and Helena may be, they are evidently fast rising into high favour with each other; as indeed, from so generous a gallant, and so fair a dame, was to be anticipated. She invites him to sit with her on the throne, so instantaneously acquired by force of her charms; to which graceful proposal he, after kissing her hand in knightly wise,

fails not to accede. The courtship now advances apace. Helena admires the dialect of Lynceus, and how 'one word seemed to kiss the other,'—for the Warder, as we saw, speaks in doggrel; and she cannot but wish that she also had some such talent. Faust assures her that nothing is more easy than this same practice of rhyme: it is but speaking right from the heart, and the rest follows of course. Withal he proposes that they should make a trial of it themselves. The experiment succeeds to mutual satisfaction: for not only can they two build the lofty rhyme in concert, with all convenience, but, in the course of a page or two of such crambo, many love-tokens come to light; nay we find by the Chorus that the wooing has well-nigh reached a happy end: at least, the two are 'sitting near and nearer 'each other,—shoulder on shoulder, knee by knee, hand in 'hand, they are swaying over the throne's up-cushioned lordli-'ness;' which, surely, are promising symptoms.

Such ill-timed dalliance is abruptly disturbed by the entrance of Phorcyas, now, as ever, a messenger of evil, with malignant tidings that Menelaus is at hand, with his whole force, to storm the Castle, and ferociously avenge his new injuries. An immense 'explosion of signals from the towers, of trumpets, clarions, military music, and the march of numerous armies,' confirms the news. Faust, however, treats the matter coolly; chides the unceremonious trepidation of Phorcyas, and summons his men of war; who accordingly enter, steel-clad, in military pomp, and quitting their battalions, gather round him to take his orders. In a wild Pindaric ode, delivered with due emphasis, he directs them not so much how they are to conquer Menelaus, whom doubtless he knows to be a sort of dream, as how they are respectively to manage and partition the Country they shall hereby acquire. Germanus is to have the 'bays of Corinth;' while 'Achaia, with its hundred dells,' is recommended to the care of Goth; the host of the Franks must go towards Elis; Messene is to be the Saxon's share; and Normann is to clear the seas, and make Argolis great. Sparta, however, is to continue the territory of Helena, and be queen and patroness of these inferior Dukedoms. In all this, are we to trace some faint changeful shadow of the National Character, and respective Intellectual Performance of the several European tribes? Or, perhaps, of the real History of the Middle Ages; the irruption of the northern swarms, issuing, like Faust and

his air-warriors, 'from Cimmerian Night,' and spreading over so many fair regions? Perhaps of both, and of more; perhaps properly of neither: for the whole has a chameleon character, changing hue as we look on it. However, be this as it may, the Chorus cannot sufficiently admire Faust's strategic faculty; and the troops march off, without speech indeed, but evidently in the highest spirits. He himself concludes with another rapid dithyrambic, describing the Peninsula of Greece, or rather, perhaps, typically the Region of true Poesy, 'kissed by the sea-waters,' and 'knit to the last mountain-branch' of the firm land. There is a wild glowing fire in these two odes; a musical indistinctness, yet enveloping a rugged, keen sense, which, were the gift of rhyme so common as Faust thinks it, we should have pleasure in presenting to our readers. Again and again we think of Calderon and his *Life a Dream*.

Faust, as he resumes his seat by Helena, observes that 'she is sprung from the highest gods, and belongs to the first 'world alone.' It is not meet that bolted towers should encircle her; and near by Sparta, over the hills, 'Arcadia blooms 'in eternal strength of youth, a blissful abode for them two.' 'Let thrones pass into groves: Arcadian-free be such felicity!' No sooner said than done. Our Fortress, we suppose, rushes asunder like a Palace of Air, for '*the scene altogether changes. 'A series of Grottoes now are shut-in by close Bowers. Shady 'Grove, to the foot of the Rocks which encircle the place. Faust 'and Helena are not seen. The Chorus, scattered around, lie 'sleeping.*'

In Arcadia, the business grows wilder than ever. Phorcyas, who has now become wonderfully civil, and, notwithstanding her ugliness, stands on the best footing with the poor light-headed cicada-swarm of a Chorus, awakes them to hear and see the wonders that have happened so shortly. It appears too, that there are certain 'Bearded Ones' (we suspect, Devils) waiting with anxiety, 'sitting watchful there below,' to see the issue of this extraordinary transaction; but of these Phorcyas gives her silly women no hint whatever. She tells them, in glib phrase, what great things are in the wind. Faust and Helena have been happier than mortals in these grottoes. Phorcyas, who was in waiting, gradually glided away, seeking 'roots, moss and rinds,' on household duty bent, and so 'they two remained alone.'

CHORUS.

Talk'st as if within those grottoes lay whole tracts of country,
Wood and meadow, rivers, lakes: what tales thou palm'st on us!

PHORCYAS.

Sure enough, ye foolish creatures! These are unexplored recesses;
Hall runs out on hall, spaces there on spaces: these I musing traced.
But at once reëchoes from within a peal of laughter:
Peeping in, what is it? Leaps a boy from Mother's breast to Father's,
From the Father to the Mother: such a fondling, such a dandling,
Foolish Love's caressing, teasing; cry of jest, and shriek of pleasure,
In their turn do stun me quite.
Naked, without wings a Genius, Faun in humour without coarseness,
Springs he sportful on the ground; but the ground reverberating,
Darts him up to airy heights; and at the third, the second gambol,
Touches he the vaulted Roof.

Frightened cries the Mother: Bound away, away, and as thou pleasest,
But, my Son, beware of Flying; wings nor power of flight are thine.
And the Father thus advises: In the Earth resides the virtue
Which so fast doth send thee upwards; touch but with thy toe the surface,
Like the Earthborn, old Antæus, straightway thou art strong again.
And so skips he hither, thither, on these jagged rocks; from summit
Still to summit, all about, like stricken ball rebounding, springs.

But at once in cleft of some rude cavern sinking has he vanished,
And so seems it we have lost him. Mother mourning, Father cheers her;
Shrug my shoulders I, and look about me. But again, behold what vision!
Are there treasures lying here concealed? There he is again, and garments
Glittering, flower-bestripped has on.
Tassels waver from his arms, about his bosom flutter breast-knots,
In his hand the golden Lyre; wholly like a little Phœbus,
Steps he light of heart upon the beetling cliffs: astonished stand we,
And the Parents, in their rapture, fly into each other's arms.
For what glittering's that about his head? Were hard to say what glitters,
Whether Jewels and gold, or Flame of all-subduing strength of soul.
And with such a bearing moves he, in himself this boy announces
Future Master of all Beauty, whom the Melodies Eternal
Do inform through every fibre; and forthwith so shall ye hear him,
And forthwith so shall ye see him, to your uttermost amazement.

The Chorus suggest, in their simplicity, that this elastic little urchin may have some relationship to the 'Son of Maia,'

who, in old times, whisked himself so nimbly out of his swaddling-clothes, and stole the 'Sea-ruler's trident' and 'Hephæstos' tongs,' and various other articles, before he was well span-long. But Phorcyas declares all this to be superannuated fable, unfit for modern uses. And now '*a beautiful purely melodious music* ' *of stringed instruments resounds from the Cave. All listen,* ' *and soon appear deeply moved. It continues playing in full* ' *tone;*' while Euphorion, in person, makes his appearance, '*in* ' *the costume above described;*' larger of stature, but no less frolicsome and tuneful.

Our readers are aware that this Euphorion, the offspring of Northern Character wedded to Grecian Culture, frisks it here not without reference to Modern Poesy, which had a birth so precisely similar. Sorry are we that we cannot follow him through these fine warblings and trippings on the light fantastic toe: to our ears there is a quick, pure, small-toned music in them, as perhaps of elfin bells when the Queen of Faery rides by moonlight. It is, in truth, a graceful emblematic dance, this little life of Euphorion; full of meanings and half-meanings. The history of Poetry, traits of individual Poets; the Troubadours, the Three Italians; glimpses of all things, full vision of nothing!—Euphorion grows rapidly, and passes from one pursuit to another. Quitting his boyish gambols, he takes to dancing and romping with the Chorus; and this in a style of tumult which rather dissatisfies Faust. The wildest and coyest of these damsels he seizes with avowed intent of snatching a kiss; but, alas, she resists, and, still more singular, '*flashes up in flame into the air;*' inviting him, perhaps in mockery, to follow her, and 'catch his vanished purpose.' Euphorion shakes off the remnants of the flame, and now, in a wilder humour, mounts on the crags, begins to talk of courage and battle; higher and higher he rises, till the Chorus see him on the topmost cliff, shining 'in harness as for victory:' and yet, though at such a distance, they still hear his tones, neither is his figure diminished in their eyes; which indeed, as they observe, always is, and should be, the case with 'sacred Poesy,' though it mounts heavenward, farther and farther, till it 'glitter like the fairest star.' But Euphorion's life-dance is near ending. From his high peak, he catches the sound of war, and fires at it, and longs to mix in it, let Chorus and Mother and Father say what they will.

EUPHORION.

And hear ye thunders on the ocean,
And thunders roll from tower and wall;
And host with host, in fierce commotion,
See mixing at the trumpet's call.
And to die in strife
Is the law of life,
That is certain once for all.

HELENA, FAUST, *and* CHORUS.

What a horror! spoken madly!
Wilt thou die? Then what must I?

EUPHORION.

Shall I view it, safe and gladly?
No! to share it will I hie.

HELENA, FAUST, *and* CHORUS.

Fatal are such haughty things;
War is for the stout.

EUPHORION.

Ha!—and a pair of wings
Folds itself out!
Thither! I must! I must!
'Tis my hest to fly!

[*He casts himself into the air; his Garments support him for a moment; his head radiates, a Train of Light follows him.*

CHORUS.

Icarus! earth and dust!
O, woe! thou mount'st too high.

[*A beautiful Youth rushes down at the feet of the Parents; you fancy you recognise in the dead a well-known form;*[5] *but the bodily part instantly disappears; the gold Crownlet mounts like a comet to the sky; Coat, Mantle and Lyre are left lying.*

[5] It is perhaps in reference to this phrase that certain sagacious critics among the Germans have hit upon the wonderful discovery of Euphorion being—Lord Byron! A fact, if it is one, which curiously verifies the author's prediction in this passage. But unhappily, while we fancy we recognise in the dead a well-known form, 'the bodily part instantly disappears;' and the keenest critic finds that he can see no deeper into a millstone than another man. Some *allusion* to our English Poet there is, or may be, here and in the page that precedes and the page that follows; but Euphorion is no image of any person; least of all, one would think, of George Lord Byron.

HELENA *and* FAUST.

Joy soon changes to woe,
And mirth to heaviest moan.

EUPHORION'S *voice* (*from beneath*).

Let me not to realms below
Descend, O mother, alone!

The prayer is soon granted. The Chorus chant a dirge over the remains, and then:

HELENA (*to* FAUST).

A sad old saying proves itself again in me,
Good hap with beauty hath no long abode.
So with Love's band is Life's asunder rent:
Lamenting both, I clasp thee in my arms
Once more, and bid thee painfully farewell.
Persephoneia, take my boy, and with him me.
[*She embraces Faust; her Body melts away; Garment and Veil remain in his arms.*

PHORCYAS (*to* FAUST).

Hold fast what now alone remains to thee.
That Garment quit not. They are tugging there,
These Demons at the skirt of it; would fain
To the Nether Kingdoms take it down. Hold fast!
The goddess it is not, whom thou hast lost,
Yet godlike is it. See thou use aright
The priceless high bequest, and soar aloft;
'T will lift thee away above the common world,
Far up to Æther, so thou canst endure.
We meet again, far, very far from hence.
[*Helena's Garments unfold into Clouds, encircle Faust, raise him aloft, and float away with him. Phorcyas picks up Euphorion's Coat, Mantle and Lyre from the ground, comes forward into the Proscenium, holds these Remains aloft, and says:*
Well, fairly found be happily won!
'Tis true, the Flame is lost and gone:
But well for us we have still this stuff!
A gala-dress to dub our poets of merit,
And make guild-brethren snarl and cuff;
And can't they borrow the Body and Spirit?
At least, I'll lend them Clothes enough.
[*Sits down in the Proscenium at the foot of a pillar.*

The rest of the personages are now speedily disposed of.

Panthalis, the Leader of the Chorus, and the only one of them who has shown any glimmerings of Reason, or of aught beyond mere sensitive life, mere love of Pleasure and fear of Pain, proposes that, being now delivered from the soul-confusing spell of the 'Thessalian Hag,' they should forthwith return to Hades, to bear Helena company. But none will volunteer with her; so she goes herself. The Chorus have lost their taste for Asphodel Meadows, and playing so subordinate a part in Orcus: they prefer abiding in the Light of Day, though, indeed, under rather peculiar circumstances; being no longer 'Persons,' they say, but a kind of Occult Qualities, as we conjecture, and Poetic Inspirations, residing in various natural objects. Thus, one division become a sort of invisible Hamadryads, and have their being in Trees, and their joy in the various movements, beauties and products of Trees. A second change into Echoes; a third, into the Spirits of Brooks; and a fourth take up their abode in Vineyards, and delight in the manufacture of Wine. No sooner have these several parties made up their minds, than the *Curtain falls;* and Phorcyas '*in the Proscenium rises in gigantic* '*size; but steps down from her cothurni, lays her Mask and* '*Veil aside, and shows herself as Mephistopheles, in order, so far* '*as may be necessary, to comment on the piece, by way of Epilogue.*'

Such is *Helena*, the *interlude in Faust.* We have all the desire in the world to hear Mephisto's Epilogue; but far be it from us to take the word out of so gifted a mouth! In the way of commentary on *Helena*, we ourselves have little more to add. The reader sees, in general, that Faust is to save himself from the straits and fetters of Worldly Life in the loftier regions of Art, or in that temper of mind by which alone those regions can be reached, and permanently dwelt in. Farther also, that this doctrine is to be stated emblematically and parabolically; so that it might seem as if, in Goethe's hands, the history of Faust, commencing among the realities of every-day existence, superadding to these certain spiritual agencies, and passing into a more aerial character as it proceeds, may fade away, at its termination, into a phantasmagoric region, where symbol and thing signified are no longer clearly distinguished; and thus the final result be curiously and significantly indicated, rather than directly exhibited. With regard to the special purport of Euphorion, Lynceus and the rest, we have nothing more to say

at present; nay perhaps we may have already said too much. For it must not be forgotten by the commentator, and will not, of a surety, be forgotten by Mephistopheles, whenever he may please to deliver his Epilogue, that *Helena* is not an Allegory, but a Phantasmagory; not a type of one thing, but a vague fluctuating fitful adumbration of many. This is no Picture painted on canvas, with mere material colours, and steadfastly abiding our scrutiny; but rather it is like the Smoke of a Wizard's Caldron, in which, as we gaze on its flickering tints and wild splendours, thousands of strangest shapes unfold themselves, yet no one will abide with us; and thus, as Goethe says elsewhere, 'we are reminded of Nothing and of All.'

Properly speaking, *Helena* is what the Germans call a *Mährchen* (Fabulous Tale), a species of fiction they have particularly excelled in, and of which Goethe has already produced more than one distinguished specimen. Some day we propose to translate, for our readers, that little piece of his, deserving to be named, as it is, 'THE *Mährchen*,' and which we must agree with a great critic in reckoning the 'Tale of all Tales.'[6] As to the composition of this *Helena*, we cannot but perceive it to be deeply-studied, appropriate and successful. It is wonderful with what fidelity the Classical style is maintained throughout the earlier part of the Poem; how skilfully it is at once united to the Romantic style of the latter part, and made to reappear, at intervals, to the end. And then the small half-secret touches of sarcasm, the curious little traits by which we get a peep behind the curtain! Figure, for instance, that so transient allusion to these 'Bearded Ones sitting watchful there below,' and then their tugging at Helena's Mantle to pull it down with them. By such slight hints does Mephistopheles point out our Whereabout; and ever and anon remind us, that not on the firm earth, but on the wide and airy Deep has he spread his strange pavilion, where, in magic light, so many wonders are displayed to us.

Had we chanced to find that Goethe, in other instances, had ever written one line without meaning, or many lines without a deep and true meaning, we should not have thought this little cloud-picture worthy of such minute development, or such careful study. In that case, too, we should never have seen the true *Helena* of Goethe, but some false one of our own too

[6] See Appendix I. to Vol. 4 of *Miscellanies*.

indolent imagination; for this Drama, as it grows clearer, grows also more beautiful and complete; and the third, the fourth perusal of it pleases far better than the first. Few living artists would deserve such faith from us; but few also would so well reward it.

On the general relation of *Helena* to *Faust*, and the degree of fitness of the one for the other, it were premature to speak more expressly at present. We have learned, on authority which we may justly reckon the best, that Goethe is even now engaged in preparing the Second Part of Faust, into which this *Helena* passes as a component part. With the third *Lieferung* of his Works, we understand, the beginning of that Second Part is to be published: we shall then, if need be, feel more qualified to speak.

For the present, therefore, we take leave of *Helena* and *Faust*, and of their Author: but with regard to the latter, our task is nowise ended; indeed, as yet, hardly begun; for it is not in the province of the *Mährchen* that Goethe will ever become most interesting to English readers. But, like his own Euphorion, though he rises aloft into Æther, he derives, Antæus-like, his strength from the Earth. The dullest plodder has not a more practical understanding, or a sounder or more quiet character, than this most aerial and imaginative of poets. We hold Goethe to be the Foreigner, at this era, who, of all others, the best, and the best by many degrees, deserves our study and appreciation. What help we individually can give in such a matter, we shall consider it a duty and a pleasure to have in readiness. We purpose to return, in our next Number, to the consideration of his Works and Character in general.

GOETHE.[1]

[1828.]

IT is not on this 'Second Portion' of Goethe's Works, which at any rate contains nothing new to us, that we mean at present to dwell. In our last Number, we engaged to make some survey of his writings and character in general; and must now endeavour, with such insight as we have, to fulfil that promise.

We have already said that we reckoned this no unimportant subject; and few of Goethe's readers can need to be reminded that it is no easy one. We hope also that our pretensions in regard to it are not exorbitant; the sum of our aims being nowise to solve so deep and pregnant an inquiry, but only to show that an inquiry of such a sort lies ready for solution; courts the attention of thinking men among us, nay merits a thorough investigation, and must sooner or later obtain it. Goethe's literary history appears to us a matter, beyond most others, of rich, subtle and manifold significance; which will require and reward the best study of the best heads, and to the right exposition of which not one but many judgments will be necessary.

However, we need not linger, preluding on our own inability, and magnifying the difficulties we have so courageously volunteered to front. Considering the highly complex aspect which such a mind of itself presents to us; and, still more, taking into account the state of English opinion in respect of it, there certainly seem few literary questions of our time so perplexed, dubious, perhaps hazardous, as this of the character of Goethe; but few also on which a well-founded, or even a sincere word would be more likely to profit. For our countrymen, at no time indisposed to foreign excellence, but at all times cautious of foreign singularity, have heard much of

[1] FOREIGN REVIEW, No. 3.—*Goethes Sämmtliche Werke. Vollständige Ausgabe letzter Hand.* (Goethe's Collective Works. Complete Edition, with his final Corrections.)—Second Portion, vol. vi.-x. Cotta; Stuttgard and Tübingen, 1827.

Goethe, but heard, for the most part, what excited and perplexed rather than instructed them. Vague rumours of the man have, for more than half a century, been humming through our ears: from time to time, we have even seen some distorted, mutilated transcript of his own thoughts, which, all obscure and hieroglyphical as it might often seem, failed not to emit here and there a ray of keenest and purest sense; travellers also are still running to and fro, importing the opinions or, at worst, the gossip of foreign countries: so that, by one means or another, many of us have come to understand, that considerably the most distinguished poet and thinker of his age is called Goethe, and lives at Weimar, and must, to all appearance, be an extremely surprising character: but here, unhappily, our knowledge almost terminates; and still must Curiosity, most ingenuous love of Information and mere passive Wonder alike inquire: What manner of man *is* this? How shall we interpret, how shall we even see him? What is his spiritual structure, what at least are the outward form and features of his mind? Has he any real poetic worth; how much to his own people, how much to us?

Reviewers, of great and of small character, have manfully endeavoured to satisfy the British world on these points: but which of us could believe their report? Did it not rather become apparent, as we reflected on the matter, that this Goethe of theirs was not the real man, nay could not be any real man whatever? For what, after all, were their portraits of him but copies, with some retouchings and ornamental appendages, of our grand English original Picture of the German generally? —In itself such a piece of art, as national portraits, under like circumstances, are wont to be; and resembling Goethe, as some unusually expressive Sign of the Saracen's Head may resemble the present Sultan of Constantinople!

Did we imagine that much information, or any very deep sagacity were required for avoiding such mistakes, it would ill become us to step forward on this occasion. But surely it is given to every man, if he will but take heed, to know so much as whether or not he *knows*. And nothing can be plainer to us than that if, in the present business, we can report *aught* from our own personal vision and clear hearty belief, it will be a useful novelty in the discussion of it. Let the reader be patient with us, then; and according as he finds that we speak

honestly and earnestly, or loosely and dishonestly, consider our statement, or dismiss it as unworthy of consideration.

Viewed in his merely external relations, Goethe exhibits an appearance such as seldom occurs in the history of letters, and indeed, from the nature of the case, can seldom occur. A man who, in early life, rising almost at a single bound into the highest reputation over all Europe; by gradual advances, fixing himself more and more firmly in the reverence of his countrymen, ascends silently through many vicissitudes to the supreme intellectual place among them; and now, after half a century, distinguished by convulsions, political, moral and poetical, still reigns, full of years and honours, with a soft undisputed sway; still labouring in his vocation, still forwarding, as with kingly benignity, whatever can profit the culture of his nation: such a man might justly attract our notice, were it only by the singularity of his fortune. Supremacies of this sort are rare in modern times; so universal, and of such continuance, they are almost unexampled. For the age of the Prophets and Theologic Doctors has long since passed away; and now it is by much slighter, by transient and mere earthly ties, that bodies of men connect themselves with a man. The wisest, most melodious voice cannot in these days pass for a divine one; the word Inspiration still lingers, but only in the shape of a poetic figure, from which the once earnest, awful and soul-subduing sense has vanished without return. The polity of Literature is called a Republic; oftener it is an Anarchy, where, by strength or fortune, favourite after favourite rises into splendour and authority, but like Masaniello, while judging the people, is on the ninth day deposed and shot. Nay, few such adventurers can attain even this painful preëminence: for at most, it is clear, any given age can have but one first man; many ages have only a crowd of secondary men, each of whom is first in his own eyes: and seldom, at best, can the 'Single Person' long keep his station at the head of this wild commonwealth; most sovereigns are never universally acknowledged, least of all in their lifetime; few of the acknowledged can reign peaceably to the end.

Of such a perpetual dictatorship Voltaire among the French gives the last European instance; but even with him it was perhaps a much less striking affair. Voltaire reigned over a

sect, less as their lawgiver than as their general; for he was at bitter enmity with the great numerical majority of his nation, by whom his services, far from being acknowledged as benefits, were execrated as abominations. But Goethe's object has, at all times, been rather to unite than to divide; and though he has not scrupled, as occasion served, to speak forth his convictions distinctly enough on many delicate topics, and seems, in general, to have paid little court to the prejudices or private feelings of any man or body of men, we see not at present that his merits are anywhere disputed, his intellectual endeavours controverted, or his person regarded otherwise than with affection and respect. In later years, too, the advanced age of the poet has invested him with another sort of dignity; and the admiration to which his great qualities give him claim is tempered into a milder, grateful feeling, almost as of sons and grandsons to their common father. Dissentients, no doubt, there are and must be; but, apparently, their cause is not pleaded in words: no man of the smallest note speaks on that side; or at most, such men may question, not the worth of Goethe, but the cant and idle affectation with which, in many quarters, this must be promulgated and bepraised. Certainly there is not, probably there never was, in any European country, a writer who, with so cunning a style, and so deep, so abstruse a sense, ever found so many readers. For, from the peasant to the king, from the callow dilettante and innamorato, to the grave transcendental philosopher, men of all degrees and dispositions are familiar with the writings of Goethe: each studies them with affection, with a faith which, 'where it cannot unriddle, learns to trust;' each takes with him what he is adequate to carry, and departs thankful for his own allotment. Two of Goethe's intensest admirers are Schelling of Munich, and a worthy friend of ours in Berlin; one of these among the deepest men in Europe, the other among the shallowest.

All this is, no doubt, singular enough; and a proper understanding of it would throw light on many things. Whatever we may think of Goethe's ascendency, the existence of it remains a highly curious fact; and to trace its history, to discover by what steps such influence has been attained, and how so long preserved, were no trivial or unprofitable inquiry. It would be worth while to see so strange a man for his own sake;

and here we should see, not only the man himself, and his own progress and spiritual development, but the progress also of his nation: and this at no sluggish or even quiet era, but in times marked by strange revolutions of opinions, by angry controversies, high enthusiasm, novelty of enterprise, and doubtless, in many respects, by rapid advancement: for that the Germans have been, and still are, restlessly struggling forward, with honest unwearied effort, sometimes with enviable success, no one, who knows them, will deny; and as little, that in every province of Literature, of Art and humane accomplishment, the influence, often the direct guidance of Goethe may be recognised. The history of his mind is, in fact, at the same time, the history of German culture in his day: for whatever excellence this individual might realise has sooner or later been acknowledged and appropriated by his country; and the title of *Musagetes*, which his admirers give him, is perhaps, in sober strictness, not unmerited. Be it for good or for evil, there is certainly no German, since the days of Luther, whose life can occupy so large a space in the intellectual history of that people.

In this point of view, were it in no other, Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, so soon as it is completed, may deserve to be reckoned one of his most interesting works. We speak not of its literary merits, though in that respect, too, we must say that few Autobiographies have come in our way, where so difficult a matter was so successfully handled; where perfect knowledge could be found united so kindly with perfect tolerance; and a personal narrative, moving along in soft clearness, showed us a man, and the objects that environed him, under an aspect so verisimilar, yet so lovely, with an air dignified and earnest, yet graceful, cheerful, even gay: a story as of a Patriarch to his children; such, indeed, as few men can be called upon to relate, and few, if called upon, could relate so well. What would we give for such an Autobiography of Shakspeare, of Milton, even of Pope or Swift!

The *Dichtung und Wahrheit* has been censured considerably in England; but not, we are inclined to believe, with any insight into its proper meaning. The misfortune of the work among us was, that we did not know the narrator *before* his narrative; and could not judge what sort of narrative he was bound to give, in these circumstances, or whether he was bound to give

any at all. We saw nothing of his situation; heard only the sound of his voice; and hearing it, never doubted but he must be perorating in official garments from the rostrum, instead of speaking trustfully by the fireside. For the chief ground of offence seemed to be, that the story was not noble enough; that it entered on details of too poor and private a nature; verged here and there towards garrulity; was not, in one word, written in the style of what we call a *gentleman*. Whether it might be written in the style of a *man*, and how far these two styles might be compatible, and what might be their relative worth and preferableness, was a deeper question; to which apparently no heed had been given. Yet herein lay the very cream of the matter; for Goethe was not writing to 'persons of quality' in England, but to persons of heart and head in Europe: a somewhat different problem perhaps, and requiring a somewhat different solution. As to this ignobleness and freedom of detail, especially, we may say, that, to a German, few accusations could appear more surprising than this, which, with us, constitutes the head and front of his offending. Goethe, in his own country, far from being accused of undue familiarity towards his readers, had, up to that date, been labouring under precisely the opposite charge. It was his stateliness, his reserve, his indifference, his contempt for the public, that were censured. Strange, almost inexplicable, as many of his works might appear; loud, sorrowful, and altogether stolid as might be the criticisms they underwent, no word of explanation could be wrung from him; he had never even deigned to write a preface. And in later and juster days, when the study of Poetry came to be prosecuted in another spirit, and it was found that Goethe was standing, not like a culprit to plead for himself before the literary *plebeians*, but like a high teacher and preacher, speaking for truth, to whom both *plebeians* and *patricians* were bound to give all ear, the outward difficulty of interpreting his works began indeed to vanish; but enough still remained, nay increased curiosity had given rise to new difficulties and deeper inquiries. Not only *what* were these works, but *how* did they originate, became questions for the critic. Yet several of Goethe's chief productions, and of his smaller poems nearly the whole, seemed so intimately interwoven with his private history, that, without some knowledge of this, no answer to such questions could be given. Nay commentaries have been written on single

pieces of his, endeavouring, by way of guess, to supply this deficiency.[2] We can thus judge whether, to the Germans, such minuteness of exposition in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* may have seemed a sin. Few readers of Goethe, we believe, but would wish rather to see it extended than curtailed.

It is our duty also to remark, if any one be still unaware of it, that the *Memoirs of Goethe*, published some years ago in London, can have no real concern with this Autobiography. The rage of hunger is an excuse for much; otherwise that German Translator, whom indignant Reviewers have proved to know *no* German, were a highly reprehensible man. His work, it appears, is done from the French, and shows subtractions, and what is worse, additions. But the unhappy Dragoman has already been chastised, perhaps too sharply. If, warring with the reefs and breakers and cross eddies of Life, he still hover on this side the shadow of Night, and any word of ours might reach him; we would rather say: Courage, Brother! grow honest, and times will mend!

It would appear, then, that for inquirers into Foreign Literature, for all men anxious to see and understand the European world as it lies around them, a great problem is presented in this Goethe; a singular, highly significant phenomenon, and now also means more or less complete for ascertaining its significance. A man of wonderful, nay unexampled reputation and intellectual influence among forty millions of reflective, serious and cultivated men, invites us to study him; and to determine for ourselves, whether and how far such influence has been salutary, such reputation merited. That this call will one day be answered, that Goethe will be seen and judged of in his real character among us, appears certain enough. His name, long familiar everywhere, has now awakened the attention of critics in all European countries to his works: he is studied wherever true study exists: eagerly studied even in France; nay, some considerable knowledge of his nature and spiritual importance seems already to prevail there.[3]

For ourselves, meanwhile, in giving all due weight to so curious an exhibition of opinion, it is doubtless our part, at the

[2] See, in particular, Dr. Kannegiesser *Über Goethes Harzreise im Winter* 1820.

[3] Witness *Le Tasse, Drame par Duval*, and the Criticisms on it. See also the Essays in the *Globe*, Nos. 55, 64 (1826).

same time, to beware that we do not give it too much. This universal sentiment of admiration is wonderful, is interesting enough; but it must not lead us astray. We English stand as yet without the sphere of it; neither will we plunge blindly in, but enter considerately, or, if we see good, keep aloof from it altogether. Fame, we may understand, is no sure test of merit, but only a probability of such: it is an accident, not a property, of a man; like light, it can give little or nothing, but at most may show what is given; often it is but a false glare, dazzling the eyes of the vulgar, lending by casual extrinsic splendour the brightness and manifold glance of the diamond to pebbles of no value. A man is in all cases simply *the* man, of the same intrinsic worth and weakness, whether his worth and weakness lie hidden in the depths of his own consciousness, or be betrumpeted and beshouted from end to end of the habitable globe. These are plain truths, which no one should lose sight of; though, whether in love or in anger, for praise or for condemnation, most of us are too apt to forget them. But least of all can it become the critic to 'follow a multitude to do evil,' even when that evil is excess of admiration: on the contrary, it will behove him to lift up his voice, how feeble soever, how unheeded soever, against the common delusion; from which, if he can save, or help to save, any mortal, his endeavours will have been repaid.

With these things in some measure before us, we must remind our readers of another influence at work in this affair, and one acting, as we think, in the contrary direction. That pitiful enough desire for 'originality,' which lurks and acts in all minds, will rather, we imagine, lead the critic of Foreign Literature to adopt the negative than the affirmative with regard to Goethe. If a writer indeed feel that he is writing for England alone, invisibly and inaudibly to the rest of the Earth, the temptations may be pretty equally balanced; if he write for some small conclave, which he mistakenly thinks the representative of England, they may sway this way or that, as it chances. But writing in such isolated spirit is no longer possible. Traffic, with its swift ships, is uniting all nations into one; Europe at large is becoming more and more one public; and in this public, the voices for Goethe, compared with those against him, are in the proportion, as we reckon them, both as to the number and value, of perhaps a hundred to one. We take in, not Ger-

many alone, but France and Italy; not the Schlegels and Schellings, but the Manzonis and De Staëls. The bias of originality, therefore, may lie to the side of censure; and whoever among us shall step forward, with such knowledge as our common critics have of Goethe, to enlighten the European public, by contradiction in this matter, displays a heroism, which, in estimating his other merits, ought nowise to be forgotten.

Our own view of the case coincides, we confess, in some degree with that of the majority. We reckon that Goethe's fame has, to a considerable extent, been deserved; that his influence has been of high benefit to his own country; nay more, that it promises to be of benefit to us, and to all other nations. The essential grounds of this opinion, which to explain minutely were a long, indeed boundless task, we may state without many words. We find then in Goethe, an Artist, in the high and ancient meaning of that term; in the meaning which it may have borne long ago among the masters of Italian painting, and the fathers of Poetry in England; we say that we trace in the creations of this man, belonging in every sense to our own time, some touches of that old, divine spirit, which had long passed away from among us, nay which, as has often been laboriously demonstrated, was not to return to this world any more.

Or perhaps we come nearer our meaning, if we say that in Goethe we discover by far the most striking instance, in our time, of a writer who is, in strict speech, what Philosophy can call a Man. He is neither noble nor plebeian, neither liberal nor servile, nor infidel nor devotee; but the best excellence of *all* these, joined in pure union; 'a clear and universal *Man*.' Goethe's poetry is no separate faculty, no mental handicraft; but the voice of the whole harmonious manhood: nay it is the very harmony, the living and life-giving harmony of that rich manhood which forms his poetry. All good men may be called poets in act, or in word; all good poets are so in both. But Goethe besides appears to us as a person of that deep endowment, and gifted vision, of that experience also and sympathy in the ways of all men, which qualify him to stand forth, not only as the literary ornament, but in many respects too as the Teacher and exemplar of his age. For, to say nothing of his natural gifts, he has cultivated himself and his art, he has studied how to live and to write, with a fidelity, an unwearied earnestness, of which there is no other living instance; of which,

among British poets especially, Wordsworth alone offers any resemblance. And this in our view is the result: To our minds, in these soft, melodious imaginations of his, there is embodied the Wisdom which is proper to this time; the beautiful, the religious Wisdom, which may still, with something of its old impressiveness, speak to the whole soul; still, in these hard, unbelieving utilitarian days, reveal to us glimpses of the Unseen but not unreal World, that so the Actual and the Ideal may again meet together, and clear Knowledge be again wedded to Religion, in the life and business of men.

Such is our conviction or persuasion with regard to the poetry of Goethe. Could we demonstrate this opinion to be true, could we even exhibit it with that degree of clearness and consistency which it has attained in our own thoughts, Goethe were, on our part, sufficiently recommended to the best attention of all thinking men. But, unhappily, it is not a subject susceptible of demonstration: the merits and characteristics of a Poet are not to be set forth by logic; but to be gathered by personal, and as in this case it must be, by deep and careful inspection of his works. Nay Goethe's world is every way so different from ours; it costs us such effort, we have so much to remember, and so much to forget, before we can transfer ourselves in any measure into his peculiar point of vision, that a right study of him, for an Englishman, even of ingenuous, open, inquisitive mind, becomes unusually difficult; for a fixed, decided, contemptuous Englishman, next to impossible. To a reader of the first class, helps may be given, explanations will remove many a difficulty; beauties that lay hidden may be made apparent; and directions, adapted to his actual position, will at length guide him into the proper track for such an inquiry. All this, however, must be a work of progression and detail. To do our part in it, from time to time, must rank among the best duties of an English Foreign Review. Meanwhile, our present endeavour limits itself within far narrower bounds. We cannot aim to make Goethe known, but only to prove that he is worthy of being known; at most, to point out, as it were afar off, the path by which some knowledge of him may be obtained. A slight glance at his general literary character and procedure, and one or two of his chief productions which throw light on these, must for the present suffice.

A French diplomatic personage, contemplating Goethe's physiognomy, is said to have observed: *Voilà un homme qui a eu beaucoup de chagrins.* A truer version of the matter, Goethe himself seems to think, would have been: Here is a man who has struggled toughly; who has *es sich recht sauer werden lassen.* Goethe's life, whether as a writer and thinker, or as a living active man, has indeed been a life of effort, of earnest toilsome endeavour after all excellence. Accordingly, his intellectual progress, his spiritual and moral history, as it may be gathered from his successive Works, furnishes, with us, no small portion of the pleasure and profit we derive from perusing them. Participating deeply in all the influences of his age, he has from the first, at every new epoch, stood forth to elucidate the new circumstances of the time; to offer the instruction, the solace, which that time required. His literary life divides itself into two portions widely different in character: the products of the first, once so new and original, have long, either directly or through the thousand thousand imitations of them, been familiar to us; with the products of the second, equally original, and in our day far more precious, we are yet little acquainted. These two classes of works stand curiously related with each other; at first view, in strong contradiction, yet, in truth, connected together by the strictest sequence. For Goethe has not only suffered and mourned in bitter agony under the spiritual perplexities of his time; but he has also mastered these, he is above them, and has shown others how to rise above them. At one time, we found him in darkness, and now he is in light; he was once an Unbeliever, and now he is a Believer; and he believes, moreover, not by denying his unbelief, but by following it out; not by stopping short, still less turning back, in his inquiries, but by resolutely prosecuting them. This, it appears to us, is a case of singular interest, and rarely exemplified, if at all, elsewhere, in these our days. How has this man, to whom the world once offered nothing but blackness, denial and despair, attained to that better vision which now shows it to him not tolerable only, but full of solemnity and loveliness? How has the belief of a Saint been united in this high and true mind with the clearness of a Sceptic; the devout spirit of a Fénelon made to blend in soft harmony with the gaiety, the sarcasm, the shrewdness of a Voltaire?

Goethe's two earliest works are *Götz von Berlichingen* and

the *Sorrows of Werter*. The boundless influence and popularity they gained, both at home and abroad, is well known. It was they that established almost at once his literary fame in his own country; and even determined his subsequent private history for they brought him into contact with the Duke of Weimar; in connexion with whom, the Poet, engaged in manifold duties, political as well as literary, has lived for fifty-four years, and still, in honourable retirement, continues to live.[4] Their effects over Europe at large were not less striking than in Germany.

'It would be difficult,' observes a writer on this subject, 'to name two books which have exercised a deeper influence on the subsequent literature of Europe, than these two performances of a young author; his first-fruits, the produce of his twenty-fourth year. *Werter* appeared to seize the hearts of men in all quarters of the world, and to utter for them the word which they had long been waiting to hear. As usually happens, too, this same word, once uttered, was soon abundantly repeated; spoken in all dialects, and chanted through all notes of the gamut, till the sound of it had grown a weariness rather than a pleasure. Sceptical sentimentality, view-hunting, love, friendship, suicide, and desperation, became the staple of literary ware; and though the epidemic, after a long course of years, subsided in Germany, it reappeared with various modifications in other countries, and everywhere abundant traces of its good and bad effects are still to be discerned. The fortune of *Berlichingen with the Iron Hand*, though less sudden, was by no means less exalted. In his own country, *Götz*, though he now stands solitary and childless, became the parent of an innumerable progeny of chivalry plays, feudal delineations, and poetico-antiquarian performances; which, though long ago deceased, made noise enough in their day and generation: and with ourselves, his influence has been perhaps still more remarkable. Sir Walter Scott's first literary enterprise was a translation of *Götz von Berlichingen;* and, if genius could be communicated like instruction, we might call this work of Goethe's the prime cause of *Marmion* and the *Lady of the Lake*, with all that has followed from the same creative hand. Truly, a grain of seed that has lighted on the right soil! For if not firmer and fairer, it has grown to be taller and broader than any other tree; and all the nations of the earth are still yearly gathering of its fruit.

'But, overlooking these spiritual genealogies, which bring little certainty and little profit, it may be sufficient to observe of *Berlichingen* and *Werter*, that they stand prominent among the causes, or, at the very least, among the signals of a great change in modern literature. The

[4] Since the above was written, that worthy Prince,—worthy, we have understood, in all respects, exemplary in whatever concerned Literature and the Arts,—has been called suddenly away. He died on his road from Berlin, near Torgau, on the 24th of June.

former directed men's attention with a new force to the picturesque effects of the Past; and the latter, for the first time, attempted the more accurate delineation of a class of feelings deeply important to modern minds, but for which our elder poetry offered no exponent, and perhaps could offer none, because they are feelings that arise from Passion incapable of being converted into Action, and belong chiefly to an age as indolent, cultivated and unbelieving as our own. This, notwithstanding the dash of falsehood which may exist in *Werter* itself, and the boundless delirium of extravagance which it called forth in others, is a high praise which cannot justly be denied it. The English reader ought also to understand that our current version of *Werter* is mutilated and inaccurate: it comes to us through the all-subduing medium of the French, shorn of its caustic strength, with its melancholy rendered maudlin, its hero reduced from the stately gloom of a broken-hearted poet to the tearful wrangling of a dyspeptic tailor.'[5]

To the same dark wayward mood, which, in *Werter*, pours itself forth in bitter wailings over human life; and, in *Berlichingen*, appears as a fond and sad looking back into the Past, belong various other productions of Goethe's; for example, the *Mitschuldigen*, and the first idea of *Faust*, which, however, was not realised in actual composition till a calmer period of his history. Of this early harsh and crude yet fervid and genial period, *Werter* may stand here as the representative; and, viewed in its external and internal relation, will help to illustrate both the writer and the public he was writing for.

At the present day, it would be difficult for us, satisfied, nay sated to nausea, as we have been with the doctrines of Sentimentality, to estimate the boundless interest which *Werter* must have excited when first given to the world. It was then new in all senses; it was wonderful, yet wished for, both in its own country and in every other. The Literature of Germany had as yet but partially awakened from its long torpor: deep learning, deep reflection, have at no time been wanting there; but the creative spirit had for above a century been almost extinct. Of late, however, the Ramlers, Rabeners, Gellerts, had attained to no inconsiderable polish of style; Klopstock's *Messias* had called forth the admiration, and perhaps still more the pride, of the country, as a piece of art; a high enthusiasm was abroad; Lessing had roused the minds of men to a deeper and truer interest in Literature, had even decidedly begun to introduce a heartier, warmer and more expressive style. The Ger-

[5] Appendix I. No. 2. § *Goethe*, infra.

mans were on the alert; in expectation, or at least in full readiness for some far bolder impulse; waiting for the Poet that might speak to them from the heart to the heart. It was in Goethe that such a Poet was to be given them.

Nay the Literature of other countries, placid, self-satisfied as they might seem, was in an equally expectant condition. Everywhere, as in Germany, there was polish and languor, external glitter and internal vacuity; it was not fire, but a picture of fire, at which no soul could be warmed. Literature had sunk from its former vocation: it no longer held the mirror up to Nature; no longer reflected, in many-coloured expressive symbols, the actual passions, the hopes, sorrows, joys of living men; but dwelt in a remote conventional world, in *Castles of Otranto*, in *Epigoniads* and *Leonidases*, among clear, metallic heroes, and white, high, stainless beauties, in whom the drapery and elocution were nowise the least important qualities. Men thought it right that the heart should swell into magnanimity with Caractacus and Cato, and melt into sorrow with many an Eliza and Adelaide; but the heart was in no haste either to swell or to melt. Some pulses of heroical sentiment, a few *un*-natural tears might, with conscientious readers, be actually squeezed forth on such occasions: but they came only from the surface of the mind; nay had the conscientious man considered of the matter, he would have found that they ought not to have come at all. Our only English poet of the period was Goldsmith; a pure, clear, genuine spirit, had he been of depth or strength sufficient: his *Vicar of Wakefield* remains the best of all modern Idyls; but it is and was nothing more. And consider our leading writers; consider the poetry of Gray, and the prose of Johnson. The first a laborious mosaic, through the hard stiff lineaments of which little life or true grace could be expected to look: real feeling, and all freedom of expressing it, are sacrificed to pomp, to cold splendour; for vigour we have a certain mouthing vehemence, too elegant indeed to be tumid, yet essentially foreign to the heart, and seen to extend no deeper than the mere voice and gestures. Were it not for his *Letters*, which are full of warm exuberant power, we might almost doubt whether Gray was a man of genius; nay was a living man at all, and not rather some thousand-times more cunningly devised poetical turning-loom, than that of Swift's Philosophers in Laputa. Johnson's prose is true, indeed,

and sound, and full of practical sense: few men have seen more clearly into the motives, the interests, the whole walk and conversation of the living busy world as it lay before him; but farther than this busy, and, to most of us, rather prosaic world, he seldom looked: his instruction is for men of business, and in regard to matters of business alone. Prudence is the highest Virtue he can inculcate; and for that finer portion of our nature, that portion of it which belongs essentially to Literature strictly so called, where our highest feelings, our best joys and keenest sorrows, our Doubt, our Love, our Religion reside, he has no word to utter; no remedy, no counsel to give us in our straits; or at most, if, like poor Boswell, the patient is importunate, will answer: "My dear Sir, endeavour to clear your mind of Cant."

The turn which Philosophical speculation had taken in the preceding age corresponded with this tendency, and enhanced its narcotic influences; or was, indeed, properly speaking, the root they had sprung from. Locke, himself a clear, humble-minded, patient, reverent, nay religious man, had paved the way for banishing religion from the world. Mind, by being modelled in men's imaginations into a Shape, a Visibility; and reasoned of as if it had been some composite, divisible and reunitable substance, some finer chemical salt, or curious piece of logical joinery,—began to lose its immaterial, mysterious, divine though invisible character: it was tacitly figured as something that might, were our organs fine enough, be *seen*. Yet who had ever seen it? Who could ever see it? Thus by degrees it passed into a Doubt, a Relation, some faint Possibility; and at last into a highly-probable Nonentity. Following Locke's footsteps, the French had discovered that 'as the stomach secretes Chyle, so does the brain secrete Thought.' And what then was Religion, what was Poetry, what was all high and heroic feeling? Chiefly a delusion; often a false and pernicious one. Poetry indeed was still to be preserved; because Poetry was a useful thing: men needed amusement, and loved to amuse themselves with Poetry: the playhouse was a pretty lounge of an evening; then there were so many precepts, satirical, didactic, so much more impressive for the rhyme; to say nothing of your occasional verses, birthday odes, epithalamiums, epicediums, by which 'the dream of existence may be so considerably sweetened and embellished.' Nay does not Poe-

try, acting on the imaginations of men, excite them to daring purposes; sometimes, as in the case of Tyrtæus, to fight better; in which wise may it not rank as a useful stimulant to man, along with Opium and Scotch Whisky, the manufacture of which is allowed by law? In Heaven's name, then, let Poetry be preserved.

With Religion, however, it fared somewhat worse. In the eyes of Voltaire and his disciples, Religion was a superfluity, indeed a nuisance. Here, it is true, his followers have since found that he went too far; that Religion, being a great sanction to civil morality, is of use for keeping society in order, at least the lower classes, who have not the feeling of Honour in due force; and therefore, as a considerable help to the Constable and Hangman, *ought* decidedly to be kept up. But such toleration is the fruit only of later days. In those times, there was no question but how to get rid of it, root and branch, the sooner the better. A gleam of zeal, nay we will call it, however basely alloyed, a glow of real enthusiasm and love of truth, may have animated the minds of these men, as they looked abroad on the pestilent jungle of Superstition, and hoped to clear the earth of it forever. This little glow, so alloyed, so contaminated with pride and other poor or bad admixtures, was the last which thinking men were to experience in Europe for a time. So is it always in regard to Religious Belief, how degraded and defaced soever: the delight of the Destroyer and Denier is no pure delight, and must soon pass away. With bold, with skilful hand, Voltaire set his torch to the jungle: it blazed aloft to heaven; and the flame exhilarated and comforted the incendiaries; but, unhappily, such comfort could not continue. Ere long this flame, with its cheerful light and heat, was gone: the jungle, it is true, had been consumed; but, with its entanglements, its shelter and its spots of verdure also; and the black, chill, ashy swamp, left in its stead, seemed for a time a greater evil than the other.

In such a state of painful obstruction, extending itself everywhere over Europe, and already master of Germany, lay the general mind, when Goethe first appeared in Literature. Whatever belonged to the finer nature of man had withered under the Harmattan breath of Doubt, or passed away in the conflagration of open Infidelity; and now, where the Tree of Life once bloomed and brought fruit of goodliest savour, there was

only barrenness and desolation. To such as could find sufficient interest in the day-labour and day-wages of earthly existence; in the resources of the five bodily Senses, and of Vanity, the only mental sense which yet flourished, which flourished indeed with gigantic vigour, matters were still not so bad. Such men helped themselves forward, as they will generally do; and found the world, if not an altogether proper sphere (for every man, disguise it as he may, has a *soul* in him), at least a tolerable enough place; where, by one item and another, some comfort, or show of comfort, might from time to time be got up, and these few years, especially since they were so few, be spent without much murmuring. But to men afflicted with the 'malady of Thought,' some devoutness of temper was an inevitable heritage: to such the noisy forum of the world could appear but an empty, altogether insufficient concern; and the whole scene of life had become hopeless enough. Unhappily, such feelings are yet by no means so infrequent with ourselves, that we need stop here to depict them. That state of Unbelief from which the Germans do seem to be in some measure delivered, still presses with incubus force on the greater part of Europe; and nation after nation, each in its own way, feels that the first of all moral problems is how to cast it off, or how to rise above it. Governments naturally attempt the first expedient; Philosophers, in general, the second.

The poet, says Schiller, is a citizen not only of his country, but of his time. Whatever occupies and interests men in general, will interest him still more. That nameless Unrest, the blind struggle of a soul in bondage, that high, sad, longing Discontent, which was agitating every bosom, had driven Goethe almost to despair. All felt it; he alone could give it voice. And here lies the secret of his popularity; in his deep, susceptive heart, he felt a thousand times more keenly what every one was feeling; with the creative gift which belonged to him as a poet, he bodied it forth into visible shape, gave it a local habitation and a name; and so made himself the spokesman of his generation. *Werter* is but the cry of that dim, rooted pain, under which all thoughtful men of a certain age were languishing: it paints the misery, it passionately utters the complaint; and heart and voice, all over Europe, loudly and at once respond to it. True, it prescribes no remedy; for that was a far different, far harder enterprise, to which other years

and a higher culture were required; but even this utterance of the pain, even this little, for the present, is ardently grasped at, and with eager sympathy appropriated in every bosom. If Byron's life-weariness, his moody melancholy, and mad stormful indignation, borne on the tones of a wild and quite artless melody, could pierce so deep into many a British heart, now that the whole matter is no longer new,—is indeed old and trite,—we may judge with what vehement acceptance this *Werter* must have been welcomed, coming as it did like a voice from unknown regions; the first thrilling peal of that impassioned dirge, which, in country after country, men's ears have listened to, till they were deaf to all else. For *Werter*, infusing itself into the core and whole spirit of Literature, gave birth to a race of Sentimentalists, who have raged and wailed in every part of the world; till better light dawned on them, or at worst, exhausted Nature laid herself to sleep, and it was discovered that lamenting was an unproductive labour. These funereal choristers, in Germany a loud, haggard, tumultuous, as well as tearful class, were named the *Kraftmänner*, or Power-men; but have all long since, like sick children, cried themselves to rest.

Byron was our English Sentimentalist and Power-man; the strongest of his kind in Europe; the wildest, the gloomiest, and it may be hoped the last. For what good is it to 'whine, put finger i' the eye, and sob,' in such a case? Still more, to snarl and snap in malignant wise, 'like dog distract, or monkey sick'? Why should we quarrel with our existence, here as it lies before us, our field and inheritance, to make or to mar, for better or for worse; in which, too, so many noblest men have, ever from the beginning, warring with the very evils we war with, both made and been what will be venerated to all time?

> What shapest thou here at the World? 'Tis shapen long ago;
> The Maker shaped it, *he* thought it best even *so*.
> Thy lot is appointed, go follow its hest;
> Thy journey's begun, thou must move and not rest;
> For sorrow and care cannot alter thy case,
> And running, not raging, will win thee the race.

Meanwhile, of the philosophy which reigns in *Werter*, and which it has been our lot to hear so often repeated elsewhere, we may here produce a short specimen. The following passage will serve our turn; and be, if we mistake not, new to the mere English reader:

'That the life of man is but a dream, has come into many a head; and with me, too, some feeling of that sort is ever at work. When I look upon the limits within which man's powers of action and inquiry are hemmed in; when I see how all effort issues simply in procuring supply for wants, which again have no object but continuing this poor existence of ours; and then, that all satisfaction on certain points of inquiry is but a dreaming resignation, while you paint, with many-coloured figures and gay prospects, the walls you sit imprisoned by,—all this, Wilhelm, makes me dumb. I return to my own heart, and find there such a world! Yet a world, too, more in forecast and dim desire, than in vision and living power. And then all swims before my mind's eye; and so I smile, and again go dreaming on as others do.

'That children know not what they want, all conscientious tutors and education-philosophers have long been agreed: but that full-grown men, as well as children, stagger to and fro along this earth; like these, not knowing whence they come or whither they go; aiming, just as little, after true objects; governed just as well by biscuit, cakes and birchrods: this is what no one likes to believe; and yet it seems to me, the fact is lying under our very nose.

'I will confess to thee, for I know what thou wouldst say to me on this point, that those are the happiest, who, like children, live from one day to the other, carrying their dolls about with them, to dress and undress; gliding also, with the highest respect, before the drawer where mamma has locked the gingerbread; and, when they do get the wished-for morsel, devouring it with puffed-out cheeks, and crying, More!—these are the fortunate of the earth. Well is it likewise with those who can label their rag-gathering employments, or perhaps their passions, with pompous titles, and represent them to mankind as gigantic undertakings for its welfare and salvation. Happy the man who can live in such wise! But he who, in his humility, observes where all this issues, who sees how featly any small thriving citizen can trim his patch of garden into a Paradise, and with what unbroken heart even the unhappy crawls along under his burden, and all are alike ardent to see the light of this sun but one minute longer;—yes, he is silent, and he too forms his world out of himself, and he too is happy because he is a man. And then, hemmed-in as he is, he ever keeps in his heart the sweet feeling of freedom, and that this dungeon—can be left when he likes.'[6]

What Goethe's own temper and habit of thought must have been, while the materials of such a work were forming themselves within his heart, might be in some degree conjectured, and he has himself informed us. We quote the following passage from his *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. The writing of *Werter*, it would seem, indicating so gloomy, almost desperate a state of mind in the author, was at the same time a symptom, indeed

[6] *Leiden des jungen Werther. Am 22 May.*

a cause, of his now having got delivered from such melancholy. Far from recommending suicide to others, as *Werter* has often been accused of doing, it was the first proof that Goethe himself had abandoned these 'hypochondriacal crotchets:' the imaginary 'Sorrows' had helped to free him from many real ones.

'Such weariness of life,' he says, 'has its physical and its spiritual causes; those we shall leave to the Doctor, these to the Moralist, for investigation; and in this so trite matter, touch only on the main point, where that phenomenon expresses itself most distinctly. All pleasure in life is founded on the regular return of external things. The alternations of day and night, of the seasons, of the blossoms and fruits, and whatever else meets us from epoch to epoch with the offer and command of enjoyment,—these are the essential springs of earthly existence. The more open we are to such enjoyments, the happier we feel ourselves; but, should the vicissitude of these appearances come and go without our taking interest in it; should such benignant invitations address themselves to us in vain, then follows the greatest misery, the heaviest malady; one grows to view life as a sickening burden. We have heard of the Englishman who hanged himself, to be no more troubled with daily putting off and on his clothes. I knew an honest gardener, the overseer of some extensive pleasure-grounds, who once splenetically exclaimed: Shall I see these clouds for ever passing, then, from east to west? It is told of one of our most distinguished men,[7] that he viewed with dissatisfaction the spring again growing green, and wished that, by way of change, it would for once be red. These are specially the symptoms of life-weariness, which not seldom issues in suicide, and, at this time, among men of meditative, secluded character, was more frequent than might be supposed.

'Nothing, however, will sooner induce this feeling of satiety than the return of love. The first love, it is said justly, is the only one; for in the second, and by the second, the highest significance of love is in fact lost. That idea of infinitude, of everlasting endurance, which supports and bears it aloft, is destroyed: it seems transient, like all that returns. * * *

'Farther, a young man soon comes to find, if not in himself, at least in others, that moral epochs have their course, as well as the seasons. The favour of the great, the protection of the powerful, the help of the active, the goodwill of the many, the love of the few, all fluctuates up and down; so that we cannot hold it fast, any more than we can hold sun, moon and stars. And yet these things are not mere natural events: such blessings flee away from us, by our own blame or that of others, by accident or destiny; but they do flee away, they fluctuate, and we are never sure of them.

[7] Lessing, we believe: but perhaps it was less the greenness of spring that vexed him than Jacobi's too lyrical admiration of it. ED.

'But what most pains the young man of sensibility is, the incessant return of our faults: for how long is it before we learn, that, in cultivating our virtues, we nourish our faults along with them! The former rest on the latter, as on their roots; and these ramify themselves in secret as strongly and as wide, as those others in the open light. Now, as we for most part practise our virtues with forethought and will, but by our faults are overtaken unexpectedly, the former seldom give us much joy, the latter are continually giving us sorrow and distress. Indeed, here lies the subtlest difficulty in Self-knowledge, the difficulty which almost renders it impossible. But figure, in addition to all this, the heat of youthful blood, an imagination easily fascinated and paralysed by individual objects; farther, the wavering commotions of the day; and you will find that an impatient striving to free oneself from such a pressure was no unnatural state.

'However, these gloomy contemplations, which, if a man yield to them, will lead him to boundless lengths, could not have so decidedly developed themselves in our young German minds, had not some outward cause excited and forwarded us in this sorrowful employment. Such a cause existed for us in the Literature, especially the Poetical Literature, of England, the great qualities of which are accompanied by a certain earnest melancholy, which it imparts to every one that occupies himself with it.

* * * * *

'In such an element, with such an environment of circumstances, with studies and tastes of this sort; harassed by unsatisfied desires, externally nowhere called forth to important action; with the sole prospect of dragging on a languid, spiritless, mere civic life,—we had recurred, in our disconsolate pride, to the thought that life, when it no longer suited one, might be cast aside at pleasure; and had helped ourselves hereby, stintedly enough, over the crosses and tediums of the time. These sentiments were so universal, that *Werter*, on this very account, could produce the greatest effect; striking in everywhere with the dominant humour, and representing the interior of a sickly youthful heart, in a visible and palpable shape. How accurately the English have known this sorrow, might be seen from these few significant lines, written before the appearance of *Werter;*

> To griefs congenial prone,
> More wounds than nature gave he knew,
> While misery's form his fancy drew
> In dark ideal hues, and horrors not its own.[8]

'Self-murder is an occurrence in men's affairs which, how much soever it may have already been discussed and commented upon, excites an interest in every mortal; and, at every new era, must be discussed again. Montesquieu confers on his heroes and great men the right of putting themselves to death when they see good; observing, that it must

[8] So in the original.

stand at the will of every one to conclude the Fifth Act of his Tragedy whenever he thinks best. Here, however, our business lies not with persons who, in activity, have led an important life, who have spent their days for some mighty empire, or for the cause of freedom; and whom one may forbear to censure, when, seeing the high ideal purpose which had inspired them vanish from the earth, they meditate pursuing it to that other undiscovered country. Our business here is with persons to whom, properly from want of activity, and in the peacefulest condition imaginable, life has nevertheless, by their exorbitant requisitions on themselves, become a burden. As I myself was in this predicament, and know best what pain I suffered in it, what efforts it cost me to escape from it, I shall not hide the speculations I, from time to time, considerately prosecuted, as to the various modes of death one had to choose from.

'It is something so unnatural for a man to break loose from himself, not only to hurt, but to annihilate himself, that he for the most part catches at means of a mechanical sort for putting his purpose in execution. When Ajax falls on his sword, it is the weight of his body that performs this service for him. When the warrior adjures his armour-bearer to slay him, rather than that he come into the hands of the enemy, this is likewise an external force which he secures for himself; only a moral instead of a physical one. Women seek in the water a cooling for their desperation; and the highly mechanical means of pistol-shooting insures a quick act with the smallest effort. Hanging is a death one mentions unwillingly, because it is an ignoble one. In England it may happen more readily than elsewhere, because from youth upwards you there see that punishment frequent without being specially ignominious. By poison, by opening of veins, men aim but at parting slowly from life; and the most refined, the speediest, the most painless death, by means of an asp, was worthy of a Queen, who had spent her life in pomp and luxurious pleasure. All these, however, are external helps; are enemies, with which a man, that he may fight against himself, makes league.

'When I considered these various methods, and farther, looked abroad over history, I could find among all suicides no one that had gone about this deed with such greatness and freedom of spirit as the Emperor Otho. This man, beaten indeed as a general, yet nowise reduced to extremities, determines, for the good of the Empire, which already in some measure belonged to him, and for the saving of so many thousands, to leave the world. With his friends he passes a gay festive night, and next morning it is found that with his own hand he has plunged a sharp dagger into his heart. This sole act seemed to me worthy of imitation; and I convinced myself that whoever could not proceed herein as Otho had done, was not entitled to resolve on renouncing life. By this conviction, I saved myself from the purpose, or indeed more properly speaking, from the whim, of suicide, which in those fair peaceful times had insinuated itself into the mind of indolent youth. Among a considerable collection of arms, I possessed a costly well-ground dagger. This I laid down

nightly beside my bed; and before extinguishing the light, I tried whether I could succeed in sending the sharp point an inch or two deep into my breast. But as I truly never could succeed, I at last took to laughing at myself; threw away all these hypochondriacal crotchets, and determined to live. To do this with cheerfulness, however, I required to have some poetical task given me, wherein all that I had felt, thought or dreamed on this weighty business might be spoken forth. With such view, I endeavoured to collect the elements which for a year or two had been floating about in me; I represented to myself the circumstances which had most oppressed and afflicted me: but nothing of all this would take form; there was wanting an incident, a fable, in which I might embody it.

'All at once I hear tidings of Jerusalem's death; and directly following the general rumour, came the most precise and circumstantial description of the business; and in this instant the plan of *Werter* was invented: the whole shot together from all sides, and became a solid mass; as the water in the vessel, which already stood on the point of freezing, is by the slightest motion changed at once into firm ice.'[9]

A wide and everyway most important interval divides *Werter*, with its sceptical philosophy and 'hypochondriacal crotchets,' from Goethe's next Novel, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, published some twenty years afterwards. This work belongs, in all senses, to the second and sounder period of Goethe's life, and may indeed serve as the fullest, if perhaps not the purest, impress of it; being written with due forethought, at various times, during a period of no less than ten years. Considered as a piece of Art, there were much to be said on *Meister*; all which, however, lies beyond our present purpose. We are here looking at the work chiefly as a document for the writer's history; and in this point of view it certainly seems, as contrasted with its more popular precursor, to deserve our best attention: for the problem which had been stated in *Werter*, with despair of its solution, is here solved. The lofty enthusiasm, which, wandering wildly over the universe, found no resting place, has here reached its appointed home: and lives in harmony with what long appeared to threaten it with annihilation. Anarchy has now become Peace; the once gloomy and perturbed spirit is now serene, cheerfully vigorous, and rich in good fruits. Neither, which is most important of all, has this Peace been attained by a surrender to Necessity, or any compact with Delusion; a seeming blessing, such as years and

[9] *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, b. iii. s. 200-213.

dispiritment will of themselves bring to most men, and which is indeed no blessing, since even continued battle is better than destruction or captivity; and peace of this sort is like that of Galgacus's Romans, who 'called it peace when they had made a desert.' Here the ardent high-aspiring youth has grown into the calmest man, yet with increase and not loss of ardour, and with aspirations higher as well as clearer. For he has conquered his unbelief; the Ideal has been built on the Actual; no longer floats vaguely in darkness and regions of dreams, but rests in light, on the firm ground of human interest and business, as in its true scene, on its true basis.

It is wonderful to see with what softness the scepticism of Jarno, the commercial spirit of Werner, the reposing polished manhood of Lothario and the Uncle, the unearthly enthusiasm of the Harper, the gay animal vivacity of Philina, the mystic, ethereal, almost spiritual nature of Mignon, are blended together in this work; how justice is done to each, how each lives freely in his proper element, in his proper form; and how, as Wilhelm himself, the mild-hearted, all-hoping, all-believing Wilhelm, struggles forwards towards his world of Art through these curiously complected influences, all this unites itself into a multifarious, yet so harmonious Whole; as into a clear poetic mirror, where man's life and business in this age, his passions and purposes, the highest equally with the lowest, are imaged back to us in beautiful significance. Poetry and Prose are no longer at variance; for the poet's eyes are opened: he sees the changes of many-coloured existence, and sees the loveliness and deep purport which lies hidden under the very meanest of them; hidden to the vulgar sight, but clear to the poet's; because the 'open secret' is no longer a secret to him, and he knows that the Universe is *full* of goodness; that whatever has being has beauty.

Apart from its literary merits or demerits, such is the temper of mind we trace in Goethe's *Meister*, and, more or less expressively exhibited, in all his later works. We reckon it a rare phenomenon this temper; and worthy, in our times, if it do exist, of best study from all inquiring men. How has such a temper been attained in this so lofty and impetuous mind, once too, dark, desolate and full of doubt, more than any other? How may we, each of us in his several sphere, attain it, or strengthen it, for ourselves? These are questions, this last is a question, in which no one is unconcerned.

To answer these questions, to begin the answer of them, would lead us very far beyond our present limits. It is not, as we believe, without long, sedulous study, without learning much and unlearning much, that, for any man, the answer of such questions is even to be hoped. Meanwhile, as regards Goethe, there is one feature of the business which, to us, throws considerable light on his moral persuasions, and will not, in investigating the secret of them, be overlooked. We allude to the spirit in which he cultivates his Art; the noble, disinterested, almost religious love with which he looks on Art in general, and strives towards it as towards the sure, highest, nay only good. We extract one passage from *Wilhelm Meister:* it may pass for a piece of fine declamation, but not in that light do we offer it here. Strange, unaccountable as the thing may seem, we have actually evidence before our mind that Goethe believes in such doctrines, nay has in some sort lived and endeavoured to direct his conduct by them.

'"Look at men," continues Wilhelm, "how they struggle after happiness and satisfaction! Their wishes, their toil, their gold, are ever hunting restlessly; and after what? After that which the Poet has received from nature; the right enjoyment of the world; the feeling of himself in others; the harmonious conjunction of many things that will seldom go together.

'"What is it that keeps men in continual discontent and agitation? It is that they cannot make realities correspond with their conceptions, that enjoyment steals away from among their hands, that the wished-for comes too late, and nothing reached and acquired produces on the heart the effect which their longing for it at a distance led them to anticipate. Now fate has exalted the Poet above all this, as if he were a god. He views the conflicting tumult of the passions; sees families and kingdoms raging in aimless commotion; sees those perplexed enigmas of misunderstanding, which often a single syllable would explain, occasioning convulsions unutterably baleful. He has a fellow-feeling of the mournful and the joyful in the fate of all mortals. When the man of the world is devoting his days to wasting melancholy for some deep disappointment; or, in the ebullience of joy, is going out to meet his happy destiny, the lightly-moved and all-conceiving spirit of the Poet steps forth, like the sun from night to day, and with soft transition tunes his harp to joy or woe. From his heart, its native soil, springs the fair flower of Wisdom; and if others while waking dream, and are pained with fantastic delusions from their every sense, he passes the dream of life like one awake, and the strangest event is to him nothing, save a part of the past and of the future. And thus the Poet is a teacher, a prophet, a friend of gods and men. How! Thou wouldst have him descend from

his height to some paltry occupation? He who is fashioned, like a bird, to hover round the world, to nestle on the lofty summits, to feed on flowers and fruits, exchanging gaily one bough for another, *he* ought also to work at the plough like an ox; like a dog to train himself to the harness and draught; or perhaps, tied up in a chain, to guard a farm-yard by his barking?"

'Werner, it may well be supposed, had listened with the greatest surprise. "All true," he rejoined, "if men were but made like birds; and, though they neither span nor weaved, could spend peaceful days in perpetual enjoyment: if, at the approach of winter, they could as easily betake themselves to distant regions; could retire before scarcity, and fortify themselves against frost."

'"Poets have lived so," exclaimed Wilhelm, "in times when true nobleness was better reverenced; and so should they ever live. Sufficiently provided for within, they had need of little from without; the gift of imparting lofty emotions, and glorious images to men, in melodies and words that charmed the ear, and fixed themselves inseparably on whatever they might touch, of old enraptured the world, and served the gifted as a rich inheritance. At the courts of kings, at the tables of the great, under the windows of the fair, the sound of them was heard, while the ear and the soul were shut for all beside; and men felt, as we do when delight comes over us, and we pause with rapture if, among the dingles we are crossing, the voice of the nightingale starts out, touching and strong. They found a home in every habitation of the world, and the lowliness of their condition but exalted them the more. The hero listened to their songs, and the Conqueror of the Earth did reverence to a Poet; for he felt that, without poets, his own wild and vast existence would pass away like a whirlwind, and be forgotten forever. The lover wished that he could feel his longings and his joys so variedly and so harmoniously as the Poet's inspired lips had skill to show them forth; and even the rich man could not of himself discern such costliness in his idol grandeurs, as when they were presented to him shining in the splendour of the Poet's spirit, sensible to all worth, and ennobling all. Nay, if thou wilt have it, who but the Poet was it that first formed Gods for us; that exalted us to them, and brought them down to us?"'[10]

For a man of Goethe's talent to write many such pieces of rhetoric, setting forth the dignity of poets, and their innate independence on external circumstances, could be no very hard task; accordingly, we find such sentiments again and again expressed, sometimes with still more gracefulness, still clearer emphasis, in his various writings. But to adopt these sentiments into his sober practical persuasion; in any measure to feel and believe that such was still, and must always be, the

[10] *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, book ii. chap. 2.

high vocation of the poet; on this ground of universal humanity, of ancient and now almost forgotten nobleness, to take his stand, even in these trivial, jeering, withered, unbelieving days; and through all their complex, dispiriting, mean, yet tumultuous influences, to 'make his light shine before men,' that it might beautify even our 'rag-gathering age' with some beams of that mild, divine splendour, which had long left us, the very possibility of which was denied: heartily and in earnest to meditate all this, was no common proceeding; to bring it into practice, especially in such a life as his has been, was among the highest and hardest enterprises which any man whatever could engage in. We reckon this a greater novelty, than all the novelties which as a mere writer he ever put forth, whether for praise or censure. We have taken it upon us to say that if such *is*, in any sense, the state of the case with regard to Goethe, he deserves not mere approval as a pleasing poet and sweet singer; but deep, grateful study, observance, imitation, as a Moralist and Philosopher. If there be any *probability* that such is the state of the case, we cannot but reckon it a matter well worthy of being inquired into. And it is for this only that we are here pleading and arguing.

On the literary merit and meaning of *Wilhelm Meister* we have already said that we must not enter at present. The book has been translated into English: it underwent the usual judgment from our Reviews and Magazines; was to some a stone of stumbling, to others foolishness, to most an object of wonder. On the whole, it passed smoothly through the critical Assaying-house; for the Assayers have Christian dispositions, and very little time; so *Meister* was ranked, without umbrage, among the legal coin of the Minerva Press; and allowed to circulate as copper currency among the rest. That in so quick a process, a German *Friedrich d'or* might not slip through unnoticed among new and equally brilliant British brass Farthings, there is no warranting. For our critics can now criticise *impromptu*, which, though far the readiest, is nowise the surest plan. *Meister* is the mature product of the first genius of our times; and must, one would think, be different, in various respects, from the immature products of geniuses who are far from the first, and whose works spring from the brain in as many weeks as Goethe's cost him years.

Nevertheless, we quarrel with no man's verdict; for Time,

which tries all things, will try this also, and bring to light the truth, both as regards criticism and thing criticised; or sink both into final darkness, which likewise will be the truth as regards them. But there is one censure which we must advert to for a moment, so singular does it seem to us. *Meister*, it appears, is a 'vulgar' work; no 'gentleman,' we hear in certain circles, could have written it; few real gentlemen, it is insinuated, can like to read it; no real lady, unless possessed of considerable courage, should profess having read it at all. Of Goethe's 'gentility' we shall leave all men to speak that have any, even the faintest knowledge of him; and with regard to the gentility of his readers, state only the following fact. Most of us have heard of the late Queen of Prussia, and know whether or not she was genteel enough, and of real ladyhood: nay, if we must prove everything, her character can be read in the *Life of Napoleon*, by Sir Walter Scott, who passes for a judge of those matters. And yet this is what we find written in the *Kunst und Alterthum* for 1824:[11]

'Books too have their past happiness, which no chance can take away:

Wer nie sein Brod mit Thränen ass,
Wer nicht die kummervollen Nächte
Auf seinem Bette weinend sass,
Der kennt euch nicht, ihr himmlischen Mächte.[12]

'These heart-broken lines a highly noble-minded, venerated Queen repeated in the cruelest exile, when cast forth to boundless misery. She made herself familiar with the Book in which these words, with many other painful experiences, are communicated, and drew from it a melancholy consolation. This influence, stretching of itself into boundless time, what is there that can obliterate?'

Here are strange diversities of taste; 'national discrepancies' enough, had we time to investigate them! Nevertheless, wishing each party to retain his own special persuasions, so far as they are honest, and adapted to his intellectual position, national or individual, we cannot but believe that there is an inward and essential Truth in Art; a Truth far deeper than the dictates of mere Mode, and which, could we pierce through

[11] Band v. s. 8.

[12] Who never ate his bread in sorrow,
Who never spent the darksome hours
Weeping and watching for the morrow,
He knows you not, ye unseen Powers.
Wilhelm Meister, book ii. chap. 13

these dictates, would be true for all nations and all men. To arrive at this Truth, distant from every one at first, approachable by most, attainable by some small number, is the end and aim of all real study of Poetry. For such a purpose, among others, the comparison of English with foreign judgment, on works that will bear judging, forms no unprofitable help. Some day, we may translate Friedrich Schlegel's Essay on *Meister*, by way of contrast to our English animadversions on that subject. Schlegel's praise, whatever ours might do, rises sufficiently high: neither does he seem, during twenty years, to have repented of what he said; for we observe in the edition of his works, at present publishing, he repeats the whole *Character*, and even appends to it, in a separate sketch, some new assurances and elucidations.

It may deserve to be mentioned here that *Meister*, at its first appearance in Germany, was received very much as it has been in England. Goethe's known character, indeed, precluded indifference there; but otherwise it was much the same. The whole guild of criticism was thrown into perplexity, into sorrow; everywhere was dissatisfaction open or concealed. Official duty impelling them to speak, some said one thing, some another; all felt in secret that they knew not what to say. Till the appearance of Schlegel's *Character*, no word, that we have seen, of the smallest chance to be decisive, or indeed to last beyond the day, had been uttered regarding it. Some regretted that the fire of *Werter* was so wonderfully abated; whisperings there might be about 'lowness,' 'heaviness;' some spake forth boldly in behalf of suffering 'virtue.' Novalis was not among the speakers, but he censured the work in secret, and this for a reason which to us will seem the strangest; for its being, as we should say, a Benthamite work! Many are the bitter aphorisms we find, among his Fragments, directed against *Meister* for its prosaic, mechanical, economical, coldhearted, altogether Utilitarian character. We English, again, call Goethe a mystic: so difficult is it to please all parties! But the good, deep, noble Novalis made the fairest amends; for notwithstanding all this, Tieck tells us, if we remember rightly, he continually returned to *Meister*, and could not but peruse and reperuse it.

On a somewhat different ground proceeded quite another sort of assault from one Pustkucher of Quedlinburg. Herr Pustkucher felt afflicted, it would seem, at the want of Patriotism

and Religion too manifest in *Meister;* and determined to take what vengeance he could. By way of sequel to the *Apprenticeship*, Goethe had announced his *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*,[13] as in a state of preparation; but the book still lingered: whereupon, in the interim, forth comes this Pustkucher with a Pseudo-*Wanderjahre* of his own; satirising, according to ability, the spirit and principles of the *Apprenticeship*. We have seen an epigram on Pustkucher and his *Wanderjahre*, attributed, with what justice we know not, to Goethe himself: whether it is his or not, it is written in his name; and seems to express accurately enough for such a purpose the relation between the parties, —in language which we had rather not translate:

Will denn von Quedlinburg aus
Ein neuer Wanderer traben?
Hat doch die Wallfisch seine Laus,
Muss auch die meine haben.

So much for Pustkucher, and the rest. The true *Wanderjahre* has at length appeared: the first volume has been before the world since 1821. This Fragment, for it still continues such, is in our view one of the most perfect pieces of composition that Goethe has ever produced. We have heard something of his being at present engaged in extending or completing it: what the whole may in his hands become, we are anxious to see; but the *Wanderjahre*, even in its actual state, can hardly be called unfinished, as a piece of writing; it coheres so beautifully within itself; and yet we see not whence the wondrous landscape came, or whither it is stretching; but it hangs before us a fairy region, hiding its borders on this side in light sunny clouds, fading away on that into the infinite azure: already, we might almost say, it gives us the notion of a *completed fragment*, or the state in which a fragment, not meant for completion, might be left.

But apart from its environment, and considered merely in itself, this *Wanderjahre* seems to us a most estimable work.

[13] 'Wanderjahre denotes the period which a German artisan is, by law 'or usage, obliged to pass in travelling, to perfect himself in his craft, after 'the conclusion of his *Lehrjahre* (Apprenticeship), and before his Master-'ship can begin. In many guilds this custom is as old as their existence, 'and continues still to be indispensable: it is said to have originated in the 'frequent journeys of the German Emperors to Italy, and the consequent 'improvement observed in such workmen among their menials as had at-'tended them thither. Most of the guilds are what is called *geschenkten*, 'that is, *presenting*, having presents to give to needy *wandering* brothers.'

There is, in truth, a singular gracefulness in it; a high, melodious Wisdom; so light is it, yet so earnest; so calm, so gay, yet so strong and deep: for the purest spirit of all Art rests over it and breathes through it; 'mild Wisdom is wedded in living union to Harmony divine;' the Thought of the Sage is melted, we might say, and incorporated in the liquid music of the Poet. 'It is called a Romance,' observes the English Translator; 'but it treats not of romance characters or subjects; it 'has less relation to Fielding's *Tom Jones* than to Spenser's '*Faëry Queen*.' We have not forgotten what is due to Spenser; yet, perhaps, beside his immortal allegory this *Wanderjahre* may, in fact, not unfairly be named; and with this advantage, that it is an allegory not of the Seventeenth century, but of the Nineteenth; a picture full of expressiveness, of what men are striving for, and ought to strive for, in these actual days. 'The 'scene,' we are farther told, 'is not laid on this firm earth; 'but in a fair Utopia of Art and Science and free Activity; 'the figures, light and aëriform, come unlooked-for, and melt 'away abruptly, like the pageants of Prospero in his Enchanted 'Island.' We venture to add, that, like Prospero's Island, this too is drawn from the inward depths, the purest sphere of poetic inspiration: ever, as we read it, the images of old Italian Art flit before us; the gay tints of Titian; the quaint grace of Domenichino; sometimes the clear yet unfathomable depth of Rafaelle; and whatever else we have known or dreamed of in that rich old genial world.

As it is Goethe's moral sentiments, and culture as a man, that we have made our chief object in this survey, we would fain give some adequate specimen of the *Wanderjahre*, where, as appears to us, these are to be traced in their last degree of clearness and completeness. But to do this, to find a specimen that should be adequate, were difficult, or rather impossible. How shall we divide what is in itself one and indivisible? How shall the fraction of a complex picture give us any idea of the so beautiful whole? Nevertheless, we shall refer our readers to the Tenth and Eleventh Chapters of the *Wanderjahre;* where, in poetic and symbolic style, they will find a sketch of the nature, objects and present ground of Religious Belief, which, if they have ever reflected duly on that matter, will hardly fail to interest them. They will find these chapters, if we mistake not, worthy of deep consideration; for this is the merit of Goethe:

his maxims will bear study; nay they require it, and improve by it more and more. They come from the depths of his mind, and are not in their place till they have reached the depths of ours. The wisest man, we believe, may see in them a reflex of his own wisdom: but to him who is still learning, they become as seeds of knowledge; they take root in the mind, and ramify, as we meditate them, into a whole garden of thought. The sketch we mentioned is far too long for being extracted here: however, we give some scattered portions of it, which the reader will accept with fair allowance. As the wild suicidal Night-thoughts of *Werter* formed our first extract, this by way of counterpart may be the last. We must fancy Wilhelm in the 'Pedagogic province,' proceeding towards the 'CHIEF, or the THREE,' with intent to place his son under their charge, in that wonderful region, 'where he was to see so many singularities.'

'Wilhelm had already noticed that in the cut and colour of the young people's clothes a variety prevailed, which gave the whole tiny population a peculiar aspect: he was about to question his attendant on this point, when a still stranger observation forced itself upon him: all the children, how employed soever, laid down their work, and turned, with singular yet diverse gestures, towards the party riding past them; or rather, as it was easy to infer, towards the Overseer, who was in it. The youngest laid their arms crosswise over their breasts, and looked cheerfully up to the sky; those of middle size held their hands on their backs, and looked smiling on the ground; the eldest stood with a frank and spirited air,—their arms stretched down, they turned their heads to the right, and formed themselves into a line; whereas the others kept separate, each where he chanced to be.

'The riders having stopped and dismounted here, as several children, in their various modes, were standing forth to be inspected by the Overseer, Wilhelm asked the meaning of these gestures; but Felix struck-in and cried gaily: "What posture am I to take, then?" "Without doubt," said the Overseer, "the first posture: the arms over the breast, the face earnest and cheerful towards the sky." Felix obeyed, but soon cried: "This is not much to my taste; I see nothing up there: does it last long? But yes!" exclaimed he joyfully, "yonder are a pair of falcons flying from the west to the east: that is a good sign too?"—"As thou takest it, as thou behavest," said the other: "Now mingle among them as they mingle." He gave a signal, and the children left their postures, and again betook them to work or sport as before.'

Wilhelm a second time 'asks the meaning of these gestures;' but the Overseer is not at liberty to throw much light on the matter; mentions only that they are symbolical, 'no-

'wise mere grimaces, but have a moral purport, which perhaps 'the CHIEF or the THREE may farther explain to him.' The children themselves, it would seem, only know it in part; 'se-'crecy having many advantages; for when you tell a man at 'once and straightforward the purpose of any object, he fan-'cies there is nothing in it.' By and by, however, having left Felix by the way, and parted with the Overseer, Wilhelm arrives at the abode of the Three, 'who preside over sacred things,' and from whom farther satisfaction is to be looked for.

'Wilhelm had now reached the gate of a wooded vale, surrounded with high walls: on a certain sign, the little door opened, and a man of earnest, imposing look received our Traveller. The latter found himself in a large beautifully umbrageous space, decked with the richest foliage, shaded with trees and bushes of all sorts; while stately walls and magnificent buildings were discerned only in glimpses through this thick natural boscage. A friendly reception from the Three, who by and by appeared, at last turned into a general conversation, the substance of which we now present in an abbreviated shape.

'"Since you intrust your son to us," said they, "it is fair that we admit you to a closer view of our procedure. Of what is external you have seen much that does not bear its meaning on its front. What part of this do you wish to have explained?"

'"Dignified yet singular gestures of salutation I have noticed; the import of which I would gladly learn: with you, doubtless, the exterior has a reference to the interior, and inversely; let me know what this reference is."

'"Well-formed healthy children," replied the Three, "bring much into the world along with them; Nature has given to each whatever he requires for time and duration; to unfold this is our duty; often it unfolds itself better of its own accord. One thing there is, however, which no child brings into the world with him; and yet it is on this one thing that all depends for making man in every point a man. If you can discover it yourself, speak it out." Wilhelm thought a little while, then shook his head.

'The Three, after a suitable pause, exclaimed, "Reverence!" Wilhelm seemed to hesitate. "Reverence!" cried they, a second time. "All want it, perhaps yourself."

'"Three kinds of gestures you have seen; and we inculcate a threefold reverence, which when commingled and formed into one whole, attains its full force and effect. The first is Reverence for what is Above us. That posture, the arms crossed over the breast, the look turned joyfully towards heaven; that is what we have enjoined on young children; requiring from them thereby a testimony that there is a God above, who images and reveals himself in parents, teachers, superiors. Then comes the second; Reverence for what is Under us. Those hands

folded over the back, and as it were tied together; that down-turned smiling look, announce that we are to regard the earth with attention and cheerfulness: from the bounty of the earth we are nourished; the earth affords unutterable joys; but disproportionate sorrows she also brings us. Should one of our children do himself external hurt, blameably or blamelessly; should others hurt him accidentally or purposely; should dead involuntary matter do him hurt; then let him well consider it; for such dangers will attend him all his days. But from this posture we delay not to free our pupil, the instant we become convinced that the instruction connected with it has produced sufficient influence on him. Then, on the contrary, we bid him gather courage, and, turning to his comrades, range himself along with them. Now, at last, he stands forth, frank and bold; not selfishly isolated; only in combination with his equals does he front the world. Farther we have nothing to add."

'"I see a glimpse of it!" said Wilhelm. "Are not the mass of men so marred and stinted, because they take pleasure only in the element of evil-wishing and evil-speaking? Whoever gives himself to this, soon comes to be indifferent towards God, contemptuous towards the world, spiteful towards his equals; and the true, genuine, indispensable sentiment of self-estimation corrupts into self-conceit and presumption. Allow me, however," continued he, "to state one difficulty. You say that reverence is not natural to man: now has not the reverence or fear of rude people for violent convulsions of nature, or other inexplicable mysteriously foreboding occurrences, been heretofore regarded as the germ out of which a higher feeling, a purer sentiment, was by degrees to be developed?"

'"Nature is indeed adequate to fear," replied they, "but to reverence not adequate. Men fear a known or unknown powerful being; the strong seeks to conquer it, the weak to avoid it; both endeavour to get quit of it, and feel themselves happy when for a short season they have put it aside, and their nature has in some degree restored itself to freedom and independence. The natural man repeats this operation millions of times in the course of his life; from fear he struggles to freedom; from freedom he is driven back to fear, and so makes no advancement. To fear is easy, but grievous; to reverence is difficult, but satisfactory. Man does not willingly submit himself to reverence, or rather he never so submits himself: it is a higher sense which must be communicated to his nature; which only in some favoured individuals unfolds itself spontaneously, who on this account too have of old been looked upon as Saints and Gods. Here lies the worth, here lies the business of all true Religions, whereof there are likewise only three, according to the objects towards which they direct our devotion."

'The men paused; Wilhelm reflected for a time in silence; but feeling in himself no pretension to unfold these strange words, he requested the Sages to proceed with their exposition. They immediately complied. "No Religion that grounds itself on fear," said they, "is regarded among us. With the reverence to which a man should give dominion in his mind, he can, in paying honour, keep his own honour; he is not

disunited with himself as in the former case. The Religion which depends on Reverence for what is Above us, we denominate the Ethnic; it is the Religion of the Nations, and the first happy deliverance from a degrading fear: all Heathen religions, as we call them, are of this sort, whatsoever names they may bear. The Second Religion, which founds itself on Reverence for what is Around us, we denominate the Philosophical; for the Philosopher stations himself in the middle, and must draw down to him all that is higher, and up to him all that is lower, and only in this medium condition does he merit the title of Wise. Here as he surveys with clear sight his relation to his equals, and therefore to the whole human race, his relation likewise to all other earthly circumstances and arrangements necessary or accidental, he alone, in a cosmic sense, lives in Truth. But now we have to speak of the Third Religion, grounded on Reverence for what is Under us: this we name the Christian; as in the Christian Religion such a temper is the most distinctly manifested: it is a last step to which mankind were fitted and destined to attain. But what a task was it, not only to be patient with the Earth, and let it lie beneath us, we appealing to a higher birthplace; but also to recognise humility and poverty, mockery and despite, disgrace and wretchedness, suffering and death, to recognise these things as divine; nay, even on sin and crime to look not as hindrances, but to honour and love them as furtherances, of what is holy. Of this, indeed, we find some traces in all ages: but the trace is not the goal; and this being now attained, the human species cannot retrograde; and we may say that the Christian Religion, having once appeared, cannot again vanish; having once assumed its divine shape, can be subject to no dissolution."

'"To which of these Religions do you specially adhere?" inquired Wilhelm.

'"To all the three," replied they; "for in their union they produce what may properly be called the true Religion. Out of those three Reverences springs the highest Reverence, Reverence for Oneself, and these again unfold themselves from this; so that man attains the highest elevation of which he is capable, that of being justified in reckoning himself the Best that God and Nature have produced; nay, of being able to continue on this lofty eminence, without being again by self-conceit and presumption drawn down from it into the vulgar level."'

The Three undertake to admit him into the interior of their Sanctuary; whither, accordingly, he, 'at the hand of the Eldest,' proceeds on the morrow. Sorry are we that we cannot follow them into the 'octagonal hall,' so full of paintings, and the 'gallery open on one side, and stretching round a spacious, gay, flowery garden.' It is a beautiful figurative representation, by pictures and symbols of Art, of the First and the Second Religions, the Ethnic and the Philosophical; for the former of which the pictures have been composed from the Old Testament; for

the latter from the New. We can only make room for some small portions.

'"I observe," said Wilhelm, "you have done the Israelites the honour to select their history as the groundwork of this delineation, or rather you have made it the leading object there."

'"As you see," replied the Eldest; "for you will remark, that on the socles and friezes we have introduced another series of transactions and occurrences, not so much of a synchronistic as of a symphronistic kind; since, among all nations, we discover records of a similar import, and grounded on the same facts. Thus you perceive here, while, in the main field of the picture, Abraham receives a visit from his gods in the form of fair youths, Apollo among the herdsmen of Admetus is painted above on the frieze. From which we may learn, that the gods, when they appear to men, are commonly unrecognised of them."

'The friends walked on. Wilhelm, for the most part, met with well-known objects; but they were here exhibited in a livelier, more expressive manner, than he had been used to see them. On some few matters he requested explanation, and at last could not help returning to his former question: "Why the Israelitish history had been chosen in preference to all others?"

'The Eldest answered: "Among all Heathen religions, for such also is the Israelitish, this has the most distinguished advantages; of which I shall mention only a few. At the Ethnic judgment-seat; at the judgment-seat of the God of Nations, it is not asked whether this is the best, the most excellent nation; but whether it lasts, whether it has continued. The Israelitish people never was good for much, as its own leaders, judges, rulers, prophets, have a thousand times reproachfully declared; it possesses few virtues, and most of the faults of other nations: but in cohesion, steadfastness, valour, and when all this would not serve, in obstinate toughness, it has no match. It is the most perseverant nation in the world; it is, it was and it will be, to glorify the name of Jehovah through all ages. We have set it up, therefore, as the pattern figure; as the main figure, to which the others only serve as a frame."

'"It becomes not me to dispute with you," said Wilhelm, "since you have instruction to impart. Open to me, therefore, the other advantages of this people, or rather of its history, of its religion."

'"One chief advantage," said the other, "is its excellent collection of Sacred Books. These stand so happily combined together, that even out of the most diverse elements, the feeling of a whole still rises before us. They are complete enough to satisfy; fragmentary enough to excite; barbarous enough to rouse; tender enough to appease; and for how many other contradicting merits might not these Books, might not this one Book, be praised?"

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'Thus wandering on, they had now reached the gloomy and per-

plexed periods of the History, the destruction of the City and the Temple, the murder, exile, slavery of whole masses of this stiffnecked people. Its subsequent fortunes were delineated in a cunning allegorical way; a real historical delineation of them would have lain without the limits of true Art.

'At this point, the gallery abruptly terminated in a closed door, and Wilhelm was surprised to see himself already at the end. "In your historical series," said he, "I find a chasm. You have destroyed the Temple of Jerusalem, and dispersed the people; yet you have not introduced the divine Man who taught there shortly before; to whom, shortly before, they would give no ear."

'"To have done this, as you require it, would have been an error. The life of that divine Man, whom you allude to, stands in no connection with the general history of the world in his time. It was a private life, his teaching was a teaching for individuals. What has publicly befallen vast masses of people, and the minor parts which compose them, belongs to the general History of the World, to the general Religion of the World; the Religion we have named the First. What inwardly befalls individuals belongs to the Second Religion, the Philosophical: such a Religion was it that Christ taught and practised, so long as he went about on Earth. For this reason, the external here closes, and I now open to you the internal."

'A door went back, and they entered a similar gallery; where Wilhelm soon recognised a corresponding series of Pictures from the New Testament. They seemed as if by another hand than the first: all was softer; forms, movements, accompaniments, light and colouring.'

Into this second gallery, with its strange doctrine about 'Miracles and Parables,' the characteristic of the Philosophical Religion, we cannot enter for the present, yet must give one hurried glance. Wilhelm expresses some surprise that these delineations terminate "with the Supper, with the scene where the Master and his Disciples part." He inquires for the remaining portion of the history.

'"In all sorts of instruction," said the Eldest, "in all sorts of communication, we are fond of separating whatever it is possible to separate; for by this means alone can the notion of importance and peculiar significance arise in the young mind. Actual experience of itself mingles and mixes all things together: here, accordingly, we have entirely disjoined that sublime Man's life from its termination. In life, he appears as a true Philosopher,—let not the expression stagger you,—as a Wise Man in the highest sense. He stands firm to his point; he goes on his way inflexibly, and while he exalts the lower to himself, while he makes the ignorant, the poor, the sick, partakers of his wisdom, of his riches, of his strength, he, on the other hand, in no wise conceals his divine origin; he dares to equal himself with God, nay to declare that he him-

self is God. In this manner he is wont, from youth upwards, to astound his familiar friends; of these he gains a part to his own cause; irritates the rest against him; and shows to all men, who are aiming at a certain elevation in doctrine and life, what they have to look for from the world. And thus, for the noble portion of mankind, his walk and conversation are even more instructive and profitable than his death: for to those trials every one is called, to this trial but a few. Now, omitting all that results from this consideration, do but look at the touching scene of the Last Supper. Here the Wise Man, as it ever is, leaves those that are his own utterly orphaned behind him; and while he is careful for the Good, he feeds along with them a traitor, by whom he and the Better are to be destroyed."'

This seems to us to have 'a deep, still meaning;' and the longer and closer we examine it, the more it pleases us. Wilhelm is not admitted into the shrine of the Third Religion, the Christian, or that of which Christ's sufferings and death were the symbol, as his walk and conversation had been the symbol of the Second, or Philosophical Religion. "That last Religion," it is said,—

'"That last Religion, which arises from the Reverence of what is Beneath us; that veneration of the contradictory, the hated, the avoided, we give to each of our pupils, in small portions, by way of outfit, along with him into the world, merely that he may know where more is to be had, should such a want spring up within him. I invite you to return hither at the end of a year, to attend our general Festival, and see how far your son is advanced: then shall you be admitted into the Sanctuary of Sorrow."

'"Permit me one question," said Wilhelm: "As you have set up the life of this divine Man for a pattern and example, have you likewise selected his sufferings, his death, as a model of exalted patience?"

'"Undoubtedly we have," replied the Eldest. "Of this we make no secret; but we draw a veil over those sufferings, even because we reverence them so highly. We hold it a damnable audacity to bring forth that torturing Cross, and the Holy One who suffers on it, or to expose them to the light of the Sun, which hid its face when a reckless world forced such a sight on it; to take these mysterious secrets, in which the divine depth of Sorrow lies hid, and play with them, fondle them, trick them out, and rest not till the most reverend of all solemnities appears vulgar and paltry. Let so much for the present suffice— * * * The rest we must still owe you for a twelvemonth. The instruction, which in the interim we give the children, no stranger is allowed to witness: then, however, come to us, and you will hear what our best Speakers think it serviceable to make public on those matters."'

Could we hope that, in its present disjointed state, this emblematic sketch would rise before the minds of our readers in

any measure as it stood before the mind of the writer; that, in considering it, they might seize only an outline of those many meanings which, at less or greater depth, lie hidden under it, we should anticipate their thanks for having, a first or a second time, brought it before them. As it is, believing that, to open-minded truth-seeking men, the deliberate words of an open-minded truth-seeking man can in no case be wholly unintelligible, nor the words of such a man as Goethe indifferent, we have transcribed it for their perusal. If we induce them to turn to the original, and study this in its completeness, with so much else that environs it and bears on it, they will thank us still more. To our own judgment at least, there is a fine and pure significance in this whole delineation: such phrases even as the 'Sanctuary of Sorrow,' the 'divine depth of Sorrow,' have of themselves a pathetic wisdom for us; as indeed a tone of devoutness, of calm, mild, priest-like dignity pervades the whole. In a time like ours, it is rare to see, in the writings of cultivated men, any opinion whatever bearing any mark of sincerity on such a subject as this: yet it is and continues the highest subject, and they that are highest are most fit for studying it, and helping others to study it.

Goethe's *Wanderjahre* was published in his seventy-second year; *Werter* in his twenty-fifth: thus in passing between these two works, and over *Meisters Lehrjahre*, which stands nearly midway, we have glanced over a space of almost fifty years, including within them, of course, whatever was most important in his public or private history. By means of these quotations, so diverse in their tone, we meant to make it visible that a great change had taken place in the moral disposition of the man; a change from inward imprisonment, doubt and discontent, into freedom, belief and clear activity: such a change as, in our opinion, must take place, more or less consciously, in every character that, especially in these times, attains to spiritual manhood; and in characters possessing any thoughtfulness and sensibility, will seldom take place without a too painful consciousness, without bitter conflicts, in which the character itself is too often maimed and impoverished, and which end too often not in victory, but in defeat, or fatal compromise with the enemy. Too often, we may well say; for though many gird on the harness, few bear it warrior-like; still fewer put it off with triumph.

Among our own poets, Byron was almost the only man we saw faithfully and manfully struggling, to the end, in this cause; and he died while the victory was still doubtful, or at best, only beginning to be gained. We have already stated our opinion, that Goethe's success in this matter has been more complete than that of any other man in his age; nay that, in the strictest sense, he may almost be called the only one that has so succeeded. On this ground, were it on no other, we have ventured to say, that his spiritual history and procedure must deserve attention; that his opinions, his creations, his mode of thought, his whole picture of the world as it dwells within him, must to his contemporaries be an inquiry of no common interest; of an interest altogether peculiar, and not in this degree exampled in existing literature. These things can be but imperfectly stated here, and must be left, not in a state of demonstration, but, at the utmost, of loose fluctuating probability; nevertheless, if inquired into, they will be found to have a precise enough meaning, and, as we believe, a highly important one.

For the rest, what sort of mind it is that has passed through this change, that has gained this victory; how rich and high a mind; how learned by study in all that is wisest, by experience in all that is most complex, the brightest as well as the blackest, in man's existence; gifted with what insight, with what grace and power of utterance, we shall not for the present attempt discussing. All these the reader will learn, who studies his writings with such attention as they merit: and by no other means. Of Goethe's dramatic, lyrical, didactic poems, in their thousandfold expressiveness, for they are full of expressiveness, we can here say nothing. But in every department of Literature, of Art ancient and modern, in many provinces of Science, we shall often meet him; and hope to have other occasions of estimating what, in these respects, we and all men owe him.

Two circumstances, meanwhile, we have remarked, which to us throw light on the nature of his original faculty for Poetry, and go far to convince us of the Mastery he has attained in that art: these we may here state briefly, for the judgment of such as already know his writings, or the help of such as are beginning to know them. The first is, his singularly emblematic intellect; his perpetual never-failing tendency to transform into *shape*, into *life*, the opinion, the feeling that may dwell in him; which, in its widest sense, we reckon to be es-

sentially the grand problem of the Poet. We do not mean mere metaphor and rhetorical trope: these are but the exterior concern, often but the scaffolding of the edifice, which is to be built up (within our thoughts) by means of them. In allusions, in similitudes, though no one known to us is happier, many are more copious, than Goethe. But we find this faculty of his in the very essence of his intellect; and trace it alike in the quiet cunning epigram, the allegory, the quaint device, reminding us of some Quarles or Bunyan; and in the *Fausts*, the *Tassos*, the *Mignons*, which in their pure and genuine personality, may almost remind us of the *Ariels* and *Hamlets* of Shakspeare. Everything has form, everything has visual existence; the poet's imagination *bodies forth* the forms of things unseen, his pen turns them to *shape*. This, as a natural endowment, exists in Goethe, we conceive, to a very high degree.

The other characteristic of his mind, which proves to us his acquired mastery in art, as this shows us the extent of his original capacity for it, is his wonderful variety, nay universality; his entire freedom from Mannerism. We read Goethe for years, before we come to see wherein the distinguishing peculiarity of his understanding, of his disposition, even of his way of writing, consists. It seems quite a simple style that of his; remarkable chiefly for its calmness, its perspicuity, in short its commonness; and yet it is the most uncommon of all styles: we feel as if every one might imitate it, and yet it is inimitable. As hard is it to discover in his writings,—though there also, as in every man's writings, the character of the writer must lie recorded,—what sort of spiritual construction he has, what are his temper, his affections, his individual specialities. For all lives freely within him: Philina and Clärchen, Mephistopheles and Mignon, are alike indifferent, or alike dear to him; he is of no sect or caste: he seems not this man, or that man, but a man. We reckon this to be the characteristic of a Master in Art of any sort; and true especially of all great Poets. How true is it of Shakspeare and Homer! Who knows, or can figure what the Man Shakspeare was, by the first, by the twentieth, perusal of his works? He is a Voice coming to us from the Land of Melody: his old brick dwellingplace, in the mere earthly burgh of Stratford-on-Avon, offers us the most inexplicable enigma. And what is Homer in the *Ilias?* He is THE WITNESS; he has seen, and he reveals it; we hear and

believe, but do not behold him. Now compare, with these two Poets, any other two; not of equal genius, for there are none such, but of equal sincerity, who wrote as earnestly, and from the heart, like them. Take, for instance, Jean Paul and Lord Byron. The good Richter begins to show himself, in his broad, massive, kindly, quaint significance, before we have read many pages of even his slightest work; and to the last, he paints himself much better than his subject. Byron may also be said to have painted nothing else than himself, be his subject what it might. Yet as a test for the culture of a Poet, in his poetical capacity, for his pretensions to mastery and completeness in his art, we cannot but reckon this among the surest. Tried by this, there is no living writer that approaches within many degrees of Goethe.

Thus, it would seem, we consider Goethe to be a richly educated Poet, no less than a richly educated Man; a master both of Humanity and of Poetry; one to whom Experience has given true wisdom, and the 'Melodies Eternal' a perfect utterance for his wisdom. Of the particular form which this humanity, this wisdom has assumed; of his opinions, character, personality, —for these, with whatever difficulty, are and must be decipherable in his writings,—we had much to say: but this also we must decline. In the present state of matters, to speak adequately would be a task too hard for us, and one in which our readers could afford little help, nay in which many of them might take little interest. Meanwhile, we have found a brief cursory sketch on this subject, already written in our language: some parts of it, by way of preparation, we shall here transcribe. It is written by a professed admirer of Goethe; nay, as might almost seem, by a grateful learner, whom he had taught, whom he had helped to lead out of spiritual obstruction, into peace and light. Making due allowance for all this, there is little in the paper that we object to.

'In Goethe's mind,' observes he, 'the first aspect that strikes us is its calmness, then its beauty; a deeper inspection reveals to us its vastness and unmeasured strength. This man rules, and is not ruled. The stern and fiery energies of a most passionate soul lie silent in the centre of his being; a trembling sensibility has been inured to stand, without flinching or murmur, the sharpest trials. Nothing outward, nothing inward, shall agitate or control him. The brightest and most capricious fancy, the most piercing and inquisitive intellect, the wildest and deepest imagination; the highest thrills of joy, the bitterest pangs of sorrow: all

these are his, he is not theirs. While he moves every heart from its steadfastness, his own is firm and still: the words that search into the inmost recesses of our nature, he pronounces with a tone of coldness and equanimity; in the deepest pathos he weeps not, or his tears are like water trickling from a rock of adamant. He is king of himself and of his world; nor does he rule it like a vulgar great man, like a Napoleon or Charles the Twelfth, by the mere brute exertion of his will, grounded on no principle, or on a false one: his faculties and feelings are not fettered or prostrated under the iron sway of Passion, but led and guided in kindly union under the mild sway of Reason; as the fierce primeval elements of Chaos were stilled at the coming of Light, and bound together, under its soft vesture, into a glorious and beneficent Creation.

'This is the true Rest of man; the dim aim of every human soul, the full attainment of only a chosen few. It comes not unsought to any; but the wise are wise because they think no price too high for it. Goethe's inward home has been reared by slow and laborious efforts; but it stands on no hollow or deceitful basis: for his peace is not from blindness, but from clear vision; not from uncertain hope of alteration, but from sure insight into what cannot alter. His world seems once to have been desolate and baleful as that of the darkest sceptic: but he has covered it anew with beauty and solemnity, derived from deeper sources, over which Doubt can have no sway. He has inquired fearlessly, and fearlessly searched out and denied the False; but he has not forgotten, what is equally essential and infinitely harder, to search out and admit the True. His heart is still full of warmth, though his head is clear and cold; the world for him is still full of grandeur, though he clothes it with no false colours; his fellow-creatures are still objects of reverence and love, though their basenesses are plainer to no eye than to his. To reconcile these contradictions is the task of all good men, each for himself, in his own way and manner; a task which, in our age, is encompassed with difficulties peculiar to the time; and which Goethe seems to have accomplished with a success that few can rival. A mind so in unity with itself, even though it were a poor and small one, would arrest our attention, and win some kind regard from us; but when this mind ranks among the strongest and most complicated of the species, it becomes a sight full of interest, a study full of deep instruction.

'Such a mind as Goethe's is the fruit not only of a royal endowment by Nature, but also of a culture proportionate to her bounty. In Goethe's original form of spirit we discern the highest gifts of manhood, without any deficiency of the lower: he has an eye and a heart equally for the sublime, the common, and the ridiculous; the elements at once of a poet, a thinker, and a wit. Of his culture we have often spoken already; and it deserves again to be held up to praise and imitation. This, as he himself unostentatiously confesses, has been the soul of all his conduct, the great enterprise of his life; and few that understand him will be apt to deny that he has prospered. As a writer, his resources have been accumulated from nearly all the provinces of human intellect

and activity; and he has trained himself to use these complicated instruments with a light expertness which we might have admired in the professor of a solitary department. Freedom, and grace, and smiling earnestness are the characteristics of his works: the matter of them flows along in chaste abundance, in the softest combination; and their style is referred to by native critics as the highest specimen of the German tongue.

* * * * *

'But Goethe's culture as a writer is perhaps less remarkable than his culture as a man. He has learned not in head only, but also in heart; not from Art and Literature, but also by action and passion, in the rugged school of Experience. If asked what was the grand characteristic of his writings, we should not say knowledge, but wisdom. A mind that has seen, and suffered, and done, speaks to us of what it has tried and conquered. A gay delineation will give us notice of dark and toilsome experiences, of business done in the great deep of the spirit; a maxim, trivial to the careless eye, will rise with light and solution over long perplexed periods of our own history. It is thus that heart speaks to heart, that the life of one man becomes a possession to all. Here is a mind of the most subtle and tumultuous elements; but it is governed in peaceful diligence, and its impetuous and ethereal faculties work softly together for good and noble ends. Goethe may be called a Philosopher; for he loves and has practised as a man the wisdom which as a poet he inculcates. Composure and cheerful seriousness seem to breathe over all his character. There is no whining over human woes: it is understood that we must simply all strive to alleviate or remove them. There is no noisy battling for opinions; but a persevering effort to make Truth lovely, and recommend her, by a thousand avenues, to the hearts of all men. Of his personal manners we can easily believe the universal report, as often given in the way of censure as of praise, that he is a man of consummate breeding and the stateliest presence: for an air of polished tolerance, of courtly, we might almost say, majestic repose and serene humanity, is visible throughout his works. In no line of them does he speak with asperity of any man; scarcely ever even of a thing. He knows the good, and loves it; he knows the bad and hateful, and rejects it; but in neither case with violence: his love is calm and active; his rejection is implied, rather than pronounced; meek and gentle, though we see that it is thorough, and never to be revoked. The noblest and the basest he not only seems to comprehend, but to personate and body forth in their most secret lineaments: hence actions and opinions appear to him as they are, with all the circumstances which extenuate or endear them to the hearts where they originated and are entertained. This also is the spirit of our Shakspeare, and perhaps of every great dramatic poet. Shakspeare is no sectarian; to all he deals with equity and mercy; because he knows all, and his heart is wide enough for all. In his mind the world is a whole; he figures it as Providence governs it; and to him it is not strange that the sun should be caused to shine on the evil and the good, and the rain to fall on the just and the unjust.'

Considered as a transient far-off view of Goethe in his personal character, all this, from the writer's peculiar point of vision, may have its true grounds, and wears at least the aspect of sincerity. We may also quote something of what follows on Goethe's character as a poet and thinker, and the contrast he exhibits in this respect with another celebrated and now altogether European author.

'Goethe,' observes this Critic, 'has been called the "German Voltaire;" but it is a name which does him wrong and describes him ill. Except in the corresponding variety of their pursuits and knowledge, in which, perhaps, it does Voltaire wrong, the two cannot be compared. Goethe is all, or the best of all, that Voltaire was, and he is much that Voltaire did not dream of. To say nothing of his dignified and truthful character as a man, he belongs, as a thinker and a writer, to a far higher class than this *enfant gâté du monde qu'il gâta.* He is not a questioner and a despiser, but a teacher and a reverencer; not a destroyer, but a builder-up; not a wit only, but a wise man. Of him Montesquieu could not have said, with even epigrammatic truth: *Il a plus que personne l'esprit que tout le monde a.* Voltaire is the *cleverest* of all past and present men; but a great man is something more, and this he surely was not.'

Whether this epigram, which we have seen in some Biographical Dictionary, really belongs to Montesquieu, we know not; but it does seem to us not wholly inapplicable to Voltaire, and at all events, highly expressive of an important distinction among men of talent generally. In fact, the popular man, and the man of true, at least of great originality, are seldom one and the same; we suspect that, till after a long struggle on the part of the latter, they are never so. Reasons are obvious enough. The popular man stands on our own level, or a hairsbreadth higher; he shows us a truth which we can see without shifting our present intellectual position. This is a highly convenient arrangement. The original man, again, stands above us; he wishes to wrench us from our old fixtures, and elevate us to a higher and clearer level: but to quit our old fixtures, especially if we have sat in them with moderate comfort for some score or two of years, is no such easy business; accordingly we demur, we resist, we even give battle; we still suspect that he is above us, but try to persuade ourselves (Laziness and Vanity earnestly assenting) that he is below. For is it not the very essence of such a man that he be *new?* And who will warrant us that, at the same time, he shall only be an intensation and continuation of the *old*, which

in general, is what we long and look for? No one can warrant us. And, granting him to be a man of real genius, real depth, and that speaks not till after earnest meditation, what sort of a philosophy were his, could *we* estimate the length, breadth and thickness of it at a single glance? And when did Criticism give two glances? Criticism, therefore, opens on such a man its greater and its lesser batteries, on every side: he has no security but to go on disregarding it; and 'in the end,' says Goethe, 'Criticism itself comes to relish that method.' But now let a speaker of the other class come forward; one of those men that 'have more than any one, the opinion which all men have'! No sooner does he speak, than all and sundry of us feel as if we had been wishing to speak that very thing, as if we ourselves might have spoken it, and forthwith resounds from the united universe a celebration of that surprising feat. What clearness, brilliancy, justness, penetration! Who can doubt that this man is right, when so many thousand votes are ready to back him? Doubtless, he is right; doubtless, he is a clever man; and his praise will long be in all the Magazines.

Clever men are good, but they are not the best. 'The in-'struction they can give us is like baked bread, savoury and 'satisfying for a single day;' but, unhappily, 'flour cannot be 'sown, and seed-corn ought not to be ground.' We proceed with our Critic in his contrast of Goethe with Voltaire.

'As poets,' continues he, 'the two live not in the same hemisphere, not in the same world. Of Voltaire's poetry, it were blindness to deny the polished, intellectual vigour, the logical symmetry, the flashes that from time to time give it the colour, if not the warmth, of fire: but it is in a far other sense than this that Goethe is a poet; in a sense of which the French literature has never afforded any example. We may venture to say of him, that his province is high and peculiar; higher than any poet but himself, for several generations, has so far succeeded in, perhaps even has steadfastly attempted. In reading Goethe's poetry, it perpetually strikes us that we are reading the poetry of our own day and generation. No demands are made on our credulity; the light, the science, the scepticism of our age, is not hid from us. He does not deal in antiquated mythologies, or ring changes on traditionary poetic forms; there are no supernal, no infernal influences,—for *Faust* is an apparent, rather than a real exception;—but there is the barren prose of the nineteenth century, the vulgar life which we are all leading, and it starts into strange beauty in his hands, and we pause in delighted wonder to behold the flowerage of poesy blooming in that parched and rugged soil. This is the end of his Mignons and Harpers, of his *Hermanns* and

Meisters. Poetry, as he views it, exists not in time or place, but in the spirit of man; and Art with Nature is now to perform for the poet what Nature alone performed of old. The divinities and demons, the witches, spectres and fairies, are vanished from the world, never again to be recalled: but the Imagination, which created these, still lives, and will forever live, in man's soul; and can again pour its wizard light over the Universe, and summon forth enchantments as lovely or impressive, and which its sister faculties will not contradict. To say that Goethe has accomplished all this, would be to say that his genius is greater than was ever given to any man: for if it was a high and glorious mind, or rather series of minds, that peopled the first ages with their peculiar forms of poetry, it must be a series of minds much higher and more glorious that shall so people the present. The angels and demons that can lay prostrate our hearts in the nineteenth century, must be of another and more cunning fashion than those who subdued us in the ninth. To have attempted, to have begun this enterprise, may be accounted the greatest praise. That Goethe ever meditated it, in the form here set forth, we have no direct evidence: but, indeed, such is the end and aim of high poetry at all times and seasons; for the fiction of the poet is not falsehood, but the purest truth; and, if he would lead captive our whole being, not rest satisfied with a part of it, he must address us on interests that *are*, not that *were* ours; and in a dialect which finds a response, and not a contradiction, within our bosoms.'[14]

Here, however, we must terminate our pilferings or open robberies, and bring these straggling lucubrations to a close. In the extracts we have given, in the remarks made on them and on the subject of them, we are aware that we have held the attitude of admirers and pleaders: neither is it unknown to us that the critic is, in virtue of his office, a judge, and not an advocate; sits there, not to do favour, but to dispense justice, which in most cases will involve blame as well as praise. But we are firm believers in the maxim that, for all right judgment of any man or thing, it is useful, nay essential, to see his good qualities before pronouncing on his bad. This maxim is so clear to ourselves, that, in respect to poetry at least, we almost think we could make it clear to other men. In the first place, at all events, it is a much shallower and more ignoble occupation to detect faults than to discover beauties. The 'critic fly,' if it do but alight on any plinth or single cornice of a brave stately building, shall be able to declare, with its half-inch vision, that here is a speck, and there an inequality; that, in fact, this and the other individual stone are nowise as they should be; for all

[14] Appendix I. No. 2. § *Goethe*, infra.

this the 'critic fly' will be sufficient: but to take-in the fair relations of the Whole, to see the building as one object, to estimate its purpose, the adjustment of its parts, and their harmonious coöperation towards that purpose, will require the eye and the mind of a Vitruvius or a Palladio. But farther, the faults of a poem, or other piece of art, as we view them at first, will by no means continue unaltered when we view them after due and final investigation. Let us consider what we mean by a fault. By the word fault we designate something that displeases us, that contradicts us. But here the question might arise: Who are *we?* This fault displeases, contradicts *us;* so far is clear; and had *we*, had *I*, and *my* pleasure and confirmation been the chief end of the poet, then doubtless he has failed in that end, and his fault remains a fault irremediably, and without defence. But who shall say whether such really was his object, whether such ought to have been his object? And if it was not, and ought not to have been, what becomes of the fault? It must hang altogether undecided; we as yet know nothing of it; perhaps it may not be the poet's, but our own fault; perhaps it may be no fault whatever. To see rightly into this matter, to determine with any infallibility, whether what we call a fault *is* in very deed a fault, we must previously have settled two points, neither of which may be so readily settled. First, we must have made plain to ourselves what the poet's aim really and truly was, how the task he had to do stood before his own eye, and how far, with such means as it afforded him, he has fulfilled it. Secondly, we must have decided whether and how far this aim, this task of his, accorded,—not with *us*, and our individual crotchets, and the crotchets of our little senate where we give or take the law, — but with human nature, and the nature of things at large; with the universal principles of poetic beauty, not as they stand written in our text-books, but in the hearts and imaginations of all men. Does the answer in either case come out unfavourable; was there an inconsistency between the means and the end, a discordance between the end and truth, there is a fault: was there not, there is no fault.

Thus it would appear that the detection of faults, provided they be faults of any depth and consequence, leads us of itself into that region where also the higher beauties of the piece, if it have any true beauties, essentially reside. In fact, according to our view, no man can pronounce dogmatically, with even

a chance of being right, on the faults of a poem, till he has seen its very last and highest beauty; the last in becoming visible to any one, which few ever look after, which indeed in most pieces it were very vain to look after; the beauty of the poem as a Whole, in the strict sense; the clear view of it as an indivisible Unity; and whether it has grown up naturally from the general soil of Thought, and stands there like a thousand-years Oak, no leaf, no bough superfluous; or is nothing but a pasteboard Tree, cobbled together out of size and waste-paper and water-colours; altogether unconnected with the soil of Thought, except by mere juxtaposition, or at best united with it by some decayed *stump* and *dead boughs*, which the more cunning Decorationist (as in your Historic Novel) may have selected for the basis and support of his agglutinations. It is true, most readers judge of a poem by pieces, they praise and blame by pieces; it is a common practice, and for most poems and most readers may be perfectly sufficient: yet we would advise no man to follow this practice, who traces in himself even the slightest capability of following a better one; and, if possible, we would advise him to practise only on worthy subjects; to read few poems that will not bear being studied as well as read.

That Goethe has his faults cannot be doubtful; for we believe it was ascertained long ago that there is no man free from them. Neither are we ourselves without some glimmering of certain actual limitations and inconsistencies by which he too, as he really lives and writes and is, may be hemmed-in; which beset him too, as they do meaner men; which show us that he too is a son of Eve. But to exhibit these before our readers, in the present state of matters, we should reckon no easy labour, were it to be adequately, to be justly done; and done anyhow, no profitable one. Better is it we should first study him; better to '*see* the great man before attempting to *oversee* him.' We are not ignorant that certain objections against Goethe already float vaguely in the English mind, and here and there, according to occasion, have even come to utterance: these, as the study of him proceeds, we shall hold ourselves ready, in due season, to discuss; but for the present we must beg the reader to believe, on our word, that we do not reckon them unanswerable, nay that we reckon them in general the most answerable things in the world; and things which even a little increase of knowledge will not fail to answer without other help.

For furthering such increase of knowledge on this matter, may we beg the reader to accept two small pieces of advice, which we ourselves have found to be of use in studying Goethe. They seem applicable to the study of Foreign Literature generally; indeed to the study of all Literature that deserves the name.

The first is, nowise to suppose that Poety is a superficial, cursory business, which may be seen through to the very bottom, so soon as one inclines to cast his eye on it. We reckon it the falsest of all maxims, that a true Poem can be adequately *tasted;* can be judged of 'as men judge of a dinner,' by some internal *tongue*, that shall decide on the matter at once and irrevocably. Of the poetry which supplies spouting-clubs, and circulates in circulating libraries, we speak not here. That is quite another species; which has circulated, and will circulate, and ought to circulate, in all times; but for the study of which no man is required to give rules, the rules being already given by the thing itself. We speak of that Poetry which Masters write, which aims not at 'furnishing a languid mind with fantastic shows and indolent emotions,' but at incorporating the everlasting Reason of man in forms visible to his Sense, and suitable to it: and of this we say, that to know it is no slight task; but rather that, being the essence of all science, it requires the purest of all study for knowing it. "What!" cries the reader, "are we to *study* Poetry? To pore over it as we do over Fluxions?" Reader, it depends upon your object: if you want only *amusement*, choose your book, and you get along, without study, excellently well. "But is not Shakspeare plain, visible to the very bottom, without study?" cries he. Alas, no, gentle Reader; we cannot think so; we do not find that he is visible to the very bottom even to those that profess the study of him. It has been our lot to read some criticisms on Shakspeare, and to hear a great many; but for most part they amounted to no such 'visibility.' Volumes we have seen that were simply one huge Interjection printed over three hundred pages. Nine-tenths of our critics have told us little more of Shakspeare than what honest Franz Horn says our neighbours used to tell of him, 'that he was a great spirit, and stept majestically along.' Johnson's Preface, a sound and solid piece for its purpose, is a complete exception to this rule; and, so far as we remember, the only complete one. Students of poetry admire Shakspeare in their tenth year; but go on admiring him

more and more, understanding him more and more, till their threescore-and-tenth. Grotius said, he read Terence otherwise than boys do. 'Happy contractedness of youth,' adds Goethe, 'nay of men in general; that at all moments of their existence 'they can look upon themselves as complete; and inquire nei-'ther after the True nor the False, nor the High nor the Deep; 'but simply after what is proportioned to themselves.'

Our second advice we shall state in few words. It is, to remember that a Foreigner is no Englishman; that in judging a foreign work, it is not enough to ask whether it is suitable to our *modes*, but whether it is suitable to foreign *wants;* above all, whether it is suitable to *itself*. The fairness, the necessity of this can need no demonstration; yet how often do we find it, in practice, altogether neglected! We could fancy we saw some Bond-street Tailor criticising the costume of an ancient Greek; censuring the highly improper cut of collar and lapel; lamenting, indeed, that collar and lapel were nowhere to be seen. He pronounces the costume, easily and decisively, to be a barbarous one: to know whether it *is* a barbarous one, and how barbarous, the judgment of a Winkelmann might be required, and he would find it hard to give a judgment. For the questions set before the two were radically different. The Fraction asked himself: How will this look in Almacks, and before Lord Mahogany? The Winkelmann asked himself: How will this look in the Universe, and before the Creator of Man?

Whether these remarks of ours may do anything to forward a right appreciation of Goethe in this country, we know not; neither do we reckon this last result to be of any vital importance. Yet must we believe that, in recommending Goethe, we are doing our part to recommend a truer study of Poetry itself; and happy were we to fancy that any efforts of ours could promote such an object. Promoted, attained it will be, as we believe, by one means and another. A deeper feeling for Art is abroad over Europe; a purer, more earnest purpose in the study, in the practice of it. In this influence we too must participate: the time will come when our own ancient noble Literature will be studied and felt, as well as talked of; when Dilettantism will give place to Criticism in respect of it; and vague wonder end in clear knowledge, in sincere reverence, and, what were best of all, in hearty emulation.

APPENDIX I.

No. 1.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION OF MEISTER'S APPRENTICESHIP.

[Edinburgh, 1824.]

WHETHER it be that the quantity of genius among ourselves and the French, and the number of works more lasting than brass produced by it, have of late been so considerable as to make us independent of additional supplies; or that, in our ancient aristocracy of intellect, we disdain to be assisted by the Germans, whom, by a species of second-sight, we have discovered, before knowing anything about them, to be a timid, dreaming, extravagant, insane race of mortals; certain it is, that hitherto our literary intercourse with that nation has been very slight and precarious. After a brief period of not too judicious cordiality, the acquaintance on our part was altogether dropped: nor, in the few years since we partially resumed it, have our feelings of affection or esteem been materially increased. Our translators are unfortunate in their selection or execution, or the public is tasteless and absurd in its demands; for, with scarcely more than one or two exceptions, the best works of Germany have lain neglected, or worse than neglected, and the Germans are yet utterly unknown to us. Kotzebue still lives in our minds as the representative of a nation that despises him; Schiller is chiefly known to us by the monstrous production of his boyhood; and Klopstock by a hacked and mangled image of his *Messias*, in which a beautiful poem is distorted into a theosophic rhapsody, and the brother of Virgil and Racine ranks little higher than the author of *Meditations among the Tombs*.

But of all these people there is none that has been more unjustly dealt with than Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. For half a century the admiration, we might almost say the idol of his countrymen, to us he is still a stranger. His name, long echoed and reëchoed through Reviews and Magazines, has become familiar to our ears: but it is a sound and nothing more; it excites no definite idea in almost any mind. To such as know him by the faint and garbled version of his *Werter*, Goethe

figures as a sort of poetic Heraclitus; some woe-begone hypochondriac, whose eyes are overflowing with perpetual tears, whose long life has been spent in melting into ecstasy at the sight of waterfalls, and clouds, and the moral sublime, or dissolving into hysterical wailings over hapless love-stories and the miseries of human life. They are not aware that Goethe smiles at this performance of his youth; or that the German Werter, with all his faults, is a very different person from his English namesake; that his Sorrows are in the original recorded in a tone of strength and sarcastic emphasis, of which the other offers no vestige, and intermingled with touches of powerful thought, glimpses of a philosophy deep as it is bitter, which our sagacious translator has seen proper wholly to omit. Others again, who have fallen-in with Retzsch's *Outlines* and the extracts from *Faust*, consider Goethe as a wild mystic, a dealer in demonology and osteology, who draws attention by the aid of skeletons and evil spirits, whose excellence it is to be extravagant, whose chief aim it is to do what no one but himself has tried. The tyro in German may tell us that the charm of *Faust* is altogether unconnected with its preternatural import; that the work delineates the fate of human enthusiasm struggling against doubts and errors from within, against scepticism, contempt and selfishness from without; and that the witchcraft and magic, intended merely as a shadowy frame for so complex and mysterious a picture of the moral world and the human soul, are introduced for the purpose not so much of being trembled at as laughed at. The voice of the tyro is not listened to; our indolence takes part with our ignorance; *Faust* continues to be called a monster; and Goethe is regarded as a man of "some genius," which he has perverted to produce all manner of misfashioned prodigies; things false, abortive, formless, gorgons and hydras and chimeras dire.

Now it must no doubt be granted, that so long as our invaluable constitution is preserved in its pristine purity, the British nation may exist in a state of comparative prosperity with very inadequate ideas of Goethe: but, at the same time, the present arrangement is an evil in its kind; slight, it is true, and easy to be borne, yet still more easy to be remedied, and which therefore ought to have been remedied ere now. Minds like Goethe's are the common property of all nations; and, for many reasons, all should have correct impressions of them.

It is partly with the view of doing something to supply this want that *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* is now presented to the English public. Written in its Author's forty-fifth year, embracing hints or disquisitions on almost every leading point in life and literature, it affords us a more distinct view of his matured genius, his manner of thought and favourite subjects, than any of his other works. Nor is it Goethe alone whom it portrays; the prevailing taste of Germany is likewise indicated by it. Since the year 1795, when it first appeared at Berlin, numerous editions of *Meister* have been printed: critics of all ranks, and some of them dissenting widely from its doctrines, have loaded it with encomiums; its songs and poems are familiar to every German ear; the people read it,

and speak of it, with an admiration approaching in many cases to enthusiasm.

That it will be equally successful in England I am far indeed from anticipating. Apart from the above considerations, from the curiosity, intelligent or idle, which it may awaken, the number of admiring, or even approving judges it will find can scarcely fail of being very limited. To the great mass of readers, who read to drive away the tedium of mental vacancy, employing the crude phantasmagoria of a modern novel, as their grandfathers employed tobacco and diluted brandy, *Wilhelm Meister* will appear beyond endurance weary, flat, stale and unprofitable. Those in particular, who take delight in "King Cambyses' vein," and open *Meister* with the thought of *Werter* in their minds, will soon pause in utter dismay, and their paroxysm of dismay will pass by degrees into unspeakable contempt. Of romance interest there is next to none in *Meister;* the characters are samples to judge of, rather than persons to love or hate; the incidents are contrived for other objects than moving or affrighting us; the hero is a milksop, whom, with all his gifts, it takes an effort to avoid despising. The author himself, far from "doing it in a passion," wears a face of the most still indifference throughout the whole affair; often it is even wrinkled by a slight sardonic grin. For the friends of the sublime, then, for those who cannot do without heroical sentiments, and "moving accidents by flood and field," there is nothing here that can be of any service.

Nor among readers of a far higher character can it be expected that many will take the praiseworthy pains of Germans, reverential of their favourite author, and anxious to hunt-out his most elusive charms. Few among us will disturb themselves about the allegories and typical allusions of the work; will stop to inquire whether it includes a remote emblem of human culture, or includes no such matter; whether this is a light airy sketch of the development of man in all his endowments and faculties, gradually proceeding from the first rude exhibitions of puppets and mountebanks, through the perfection of poetic and dramatic art, up to the unfolding of the principle of religion, and the greatest of all arts, the art of life,—or is nothing more than a bungled piece of patch-work, presenting in the shape of a novel much that should have been suppressed entirely, or at least given out by way of lecture. Whether the characters do or do not represent distinct classes of men, including various stages of human nature, from the gay material vivacity of Philina to the severe moral grandeur of the Uncle and the splendid accomplishment of Lothario, will to most of us be of small importance: and the everlasting disquisitions about plays and players, and politeness and activity, and art and nature, will weary many a mind that knows not and needs not whether they are true or false. Yet every man's judgment is, in this free country, a lamp to himself: whoever is displeased will censure; and many, it is to be feared, will insist on judging *Meister* by the common rule, and what is worse, condemning it, let Schlegel bawl as loudly as he pleases. "To judge," says he, "of this book,—new and

peculiar as it is, and only to be understood and learned from itself, by our common notion of the novel, a notion pieced together and produced out of custom and belief, out of accidental and arbitrary requisitions,—is as if a child should grasp at the moon and stars, and insist on packing them into its toy-box."[1] Unhappily, the most of us have boxes; and some of them are very small!

Yet, independently of these its more recondite and dubious qualities, there are beauties in *Meister*, which cannot but secure it some degree of favour at the hands of many. The philosophical discussions it contains; its keen glances into life and art; the minute and skilful delineation of men; the lively genuine exhibition of the scenes they move in; the occasional touches of eloquence and tenderness, and even of poetry, the very essence of poetry; the quantity of thought and knowledge embodied in a style so rich in general felicities, of which, at least, the new and sometimes exquisitely happy metaphors have been preserved,—cannot wholly escape an observing reader, even on the most cursory perusal. To those who have formed for themselves a picture of the world, who have drawn out, from the thousand variable circumstances of their being, a philosophy of life, it will be interesting and instructive to see how man and his concerns are represented in the first of European minds: to those who have penetrated to the limits of their own conceptions, and wrestled with thoughts and feelings too high for them, it will be pleasing and profitable to see the horizon of their certainties widened, or at least separated with a firmer line from the impalpable obscure which surrounds it on every side. Such persons I can fearlessly invite to study *Meister*. Across the disfigurement of a translation, they will not fail to discern indubitable traces of the greatest genius in our times. And the longer they study, they are likely to discern them the more distinctly. New charms will successively arise to view; and of the many apparent blemishes, while a few superficial ones may be confirmed, the greater and more important part will vanish, or even change from dark to bright. For, if I mistake not, it is with *Meister* as with every work of real and abiding excellence, the first glance is the least favourable. A picture of Raphael, a Greek statue, a play of Sophocles or Shakspeare, appears insignificant to the unpractised eye; and not till after long and patient and intense examination, do we begin to descry the earnest features of that beauty, which has its foundation in the deepest nature of man, and will continue to be pleasing through all ages.

If this appear excessive praise as applied in any sense to *Meister*, the curious sceptic is desired to read and weigh the whole peformance, with all its references, relations, purposes; and to pronounce his verdict after he has clearly seized and appreciated them all. Or if a more faint conviction will suffice, let him turn to the picture of Wilhelm's states of mind in the end of the first Book, and the beginning of the second; the eulogies of commerce and poesy, which follow; the description of Hamlet; the character of histrionic life in Serlo and Aurelia; that of sedate

[1] *Charakteristik des Meister.*

and lofty manhood in the Uncle and Lothario. But above all, let him turn to the history of Mignon. This mysterious child, at first neglected by the reader, gradually forced on his attention, at length overpowers him with an emotion more deep and thrilling than any poet since the days of Shakspeare has succeeded in producing. The daughter of enthusiasm, rapture, passion and despair, she is of the earth, but not earthly. When she glides before us through the light mazes of her fairy dance, or twangs her cithern to the notes of her homesick verses, or whirls her tambourine and hurries round us like an antique Mænad, we could almost fancy her a spirit; so pure is she, so full of fervour, so disengaged from the clay of this world. And when all the fearful particulars of her story are at length laid together, and we behold in connected order the image of her hapless existence, there is, in those dim recollections, those feelings so simple, so impassioned and unspeakable, consuming the closely shrouded, woe-struck, yet ethereal spirit of the poor creature, something which searches into the inmost recesses of the soul. It is not tears which her fate calls forth; but a feeling far too deep for tears. The very fire of heaven seems miserably quenched among the obstructions of this earth. Her little heart, so noble and so helpless, perishes before the smallest of its many beauties is unfolded; and all its loves and thoughts and longings do but add another pang to death, and sink to silence utter and eternal. It is as if the gloomy porch of Dis and his pale kingdoms were realised and set before us, and we heard the ineffectual wail of infants reverberating from within their prison-walls forever.

Continuò auditæ voces, vagitus et ingens,
Infantumque animæ flentes in limine primo:
Quos dulcis vitæ exsortes, et ab ubere raptos,
Abstulit atra dies, et funere mersit acerbo.

The history of Mignon runs like a thread of gold through the tissue of the narrative, connecting with the heart much that were else addressed only to the head. Philosophy and eloquence might have done the rest; but this is poetry in the highest meaning of the word. It must be for the power of producing such creations and emotions, that Goethe is by many of his countrymen ranked at the side of Homer and Shakspeare, as one of the only three men of genius that have ever lived.

But my business here is not to judge of *Meister* or its Author, it is only to prepare others for judging it; and for this purpose the most that I had room to say is said. All I ask in the name of this illustrious foreigner is, that the court which tries him be pure, and the jury instructed in the cause; that the work be not condemned for wanting what it was not meant to have, and by persons nowise called to pass sentence on it.

Respecting my own humble share in the adventure, it is scarcely necessary to say anything. Fidelity is all the merit I have aimed at: to convey the Author's sentiments, as he himself expressed them; to

follow the original, in all the variations of its style, has been my constant endeavour. In many points, both literary and moral, I could have wished devoutly that he had not written as he has done; but to alter anything was not in my commission. The literary and moral persuasions of a man like Goethe are objects of a rational curiosity; and the duty of a translator is simple and distinct. Accordingly, except a few phrases and sentences, not in all amounting to a page, which I have dropped as evidently unfit for the English taste, I have studied to present the work exactly as it stands in German. That my success has been indifferent, I already know too well. In rendering the ideas of Goethe, often so subtle, so capriciously expressive, the meaning was not always easy to seize, or to convey with adequate effect. There were thin tints of style, shades of ridicule, or tenderness, or solemnity, resting over large spaces, and so slight as almost to be evanescent: some of these I may have failed to see; to many of them I could do no justice. Nor, even in plainer matters, can I pride myself in having always imitated his colloquial familiarity without falling into sentences bald and rugged, into idioms harsh or foreign; or in having copied the flowing oratory of other passages, without at times exaggerating or defacing the swelling cadences and phrases of my original. But what work, from the translating of a German novel to the writing of an epic, was ever as the workman wished and meant it? This version of *Meister*, with whatever faults it may have, I honestly present to my countrymen: if, while it makes any portion of them more familiar with the richest, most gifted of living minds, it increase their knowledge, or even afford them a transient amusement, they will excuse its errors, and I shall be far more than paid for all my labour.

No. 2.

PREFACE, AND INTRODUCTIONS, TO THE BOOK CALLED "GERMAN ROMANCE."

[Edinburgh, 1827.]

THIS was a Book of Translations, not of my suggesting or desiring, but of my executing as honest journeywork in defect of better; published at Edinburgh in 1827. The nature of which, and the Titles of the Pieces selected, will sufficiently appear as we go on. The Pieces selected were the suitablest discoverable on such terms: not quite of *less* than no worth (I considered) any Piece of them; nor, alas, of a very high worth any, except one only. Four of these lots, or quotas to the adventure, Musäus's, Tieck's, Richter's, Goethe's, will be given in the final stage of this Series: the rest we willingly leave, afloat or stranded, as waste driftwood, to those whom they may farther concern. (*Note of* 1857.)

PREFACE TO GERMAN ROMANCE.[1]

IT were unhappy for me if the reader should expect in this Work any full view of so complex a subject as German Novelwriting, or of so motley a body as the German Novelwriters. The dead wall, which divides us from this as from all other provinces of German Literature, I must not dream that I have anywhere overturned: at the most, I may have perforated it with a few loopholes, of narrow aperture truly, and scanty range; through which, however, a studious eye may perhaps discern some limited, but, as I hope, genuine and distinctive features of the singular country, which, on the other side, has long flourished in such abundant variety of intellectual scenery and product, and been unknown to us, though at our very hand. For this wall, what is the worst property in such walls, is to most of us an invisible one; and our eye rests contentedly on Vacancy, or distorted *Fata-morganas*, where a great and true-minded people have been living and labouring, in the light of Science and Art, for many ages.

In such an undertaking as the present, fragmentary in its very nature, it is not absolute, but only relative completeness, that can be looked for. German Novelwriters are easily come at; but *the* German Novelwriters are a class of persons whom no prudent editor will hope to exhibit, and no reader will engage to examine, even in the briefest mode of specimen. To say nothing of what has been accumulated in past generations, the number of Novelists at present alive and active is to be reckoned not in units, but in thousands. No Leipzig Fair is unattended by its mob of gentlemen that write with ease; each duly offering his new novel, among the other fancy-goods and fustians of that great emporium. Lafontaine, for example, has already passed his hundredth volume. The inspirations of the Artist are rare and transient, but the hunger of the Manufacturer is universal and incessant. The novel, too, is among the simplest forms of composition; a free arena for all sorts and degrees of talent, and may be worked in equally by a Henry Fielding and a Doctor Polydore. In Germany, accordingly, as in other countries, the Novelists are a mixed, innumerable, and most productive race. Interspersed with a few Poets, we behold whole legions and hosts of Poetasters, in all stages of worthlessness; here languishing in the transports of Sentimentality, there dancing the St.-Vitus dance of hard-studied Wit and Humour; some soaring on bold pinion into the thundery regions of *Atala, ou les Amours de deux Sauvages;* some diving, on as bold fin, into the gory profundities of *Frankenstein* and *The Vampyre;* and very many travelling, contented in spirit, the ancient beaten highway of Commonplace.

To discover the grain of truth among this mass of falsehood, especially where Time had not yet exercised its separating influence, was no

[1] *German Romance: Specimens of its chief Authors; with Biographical and Critical Notices.* In Four Volumes. (Edinburgh, 1827.)

plain problem; nor can I flatter myself either that I have exhausted the search, or in no case been deceived in my selection. The strength of German Literature does not lie in its Novelwriters; few of its greatest minds have put forth their full power in this department; many of them, of course, have not attempted it at all. In the seventeenth century, and prior, there was nothing whatever to be gleaned; though Anton Ulrich, Duke of Brunswick Wolfenbüttel, had laid aside his sceptre, to write a novel,[2] in six thousand eight hundred and twenty-two pages. Klopstock, Herder, Lessing, in the eighteenth century, wrote no novels: the same might almost be said of Schiller; for his fragment of the *Geisterseher* (Ghost-seer), and his Magazine-story of the *Verbrecher aus verlorener Ehre* (Criminal from Loss of Honour), youthful attempts, and both I believe already in English, scarcely form an exception. The elder Jacobi's *Woldemar* and *Allwill* I was forced, not without consciousness of their merits, to pass over as too abstruse and didactic; for a like reason of didacticality, though in a far different sense, Wieland could afford me nothing which seemed worthy of himself and our present idea of him; and Klinger's *Faust*, the product evidently of a rugged, vehement, substantial mind, seemed much too harsh, infernal, and unpoetical for English readers. Of Novalis and his wondrous fragments, I could not hope that their depth and wizard beauty would be seen across their mysticism. Other meritorious names I may have omitted, from ignorance. Maler Müller's I was obliged to omit, because none of his fictions were, properly speaking, novels; and unwillingly obliged, for his plays and idyls bespeak a true artist; and the English reader would do well, by the earliest opportunity, to substitute the warm and vigorous *Adam's Awakening* of Müller, for Gessner's rather faint and washy *Death of Abel*, in forming a judgment of the German Idyl.

A graver objection than that of omissions, is that, in my selections, I have not always fixed upon the best performance of my author; and to this I have unhappily no contradiction to give, nor any answer to make, except that it lay not in the nature of my task to avoid it; and that often not the excellence of a work, but the humble considerations of its size, its subject, and its being untranslated, had to determine my choice. In justice to our strangers, the reader will be pleased to bear this fact in mind: with regard to two of them, to Fouqué and Richter, it is especially necessary.

By a secondary arrangement, in surveying what seemed the chief names among the German Novelwriters, we have also obtained a view

[2] *Die Durchlauchtigste Syrerin Aramena* (Her Most Serene Majesty Aramena of Syria), 1669. On the whole, it is simple enough of our Magazines to inform us that the literature, nay sometimes it is also the language, of Germany, began to be cultivated in the time of Frederick II. If the names of Hutten, Opitz, Lohenstein, &c. &c. are naturally unknown to us, we ought really to have heard of Luther. Nay, was not *Jacob Böhme* rendered into huge folios, with incomparable diagrams, in the time of James I.? And is not Hans Sachs known (by name at least) to all barbers?

of the chief modes of German Novelwriting. The *Mährchen* (Popular Tale), a favourite, almost tritical topic among the Germans, is here twice handled; in what may be called the prosaic manner (by Musäus), and in the poetical (by Tieck). Of the *Ritterroman* (Chivalry Romance) there is also a specimen (by Fouqué); a short one, yet I fear, in many judgments, too long. Hoffmann's *Golden Pot* belongs to a strange sort (the Fantasy-piece), of which he himself was the originator, and which its sedulous cultivation, by minds more willing than able, bids fair, in no great length of time, to explode. Richter's two works correspond to our common English notion of the Novel; and Goethe's is a *Kunstroman* (Art-novel), a species highly prized by the Germans, and of which *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, the first in date, is also in their mind greatly the first in excellence.

If the reader will impress himself with a clear view of these six kinds; and then conceive some hundreds of persons incessantly occupied in imitating, compounding, separating, distorting, exaggerating, diluting them, he may have formed as correct an idea of the actual state of German Novelwriting, as it seemed easy with such means to afford him. On the general merits and characteristics of these works, it is for the reader and not me to pass judgment. One thing it will behove him not to lose sight of: They are German Novelists, not English ones; and their Germanhood I have all along regarded as a quality, not as a fault. To expect, therefore, that the style of them shall accord in all points with our English taste, were to expect that it should be a false and hollow style. Every nation has its own form of character and life; and the mind which gathers no nourishment from the everyday circumstances of its existence, will in general be but scantily nourished. Of writers that hover on the confines of faultless vacuity, that write not by vision but by hearsay, and so belong to all nations, or, more properly speaking, to none, there is no want in Germany more than in any other country. It would be easy to fill, not four, but four hundred volumes with German Novelists of this unblamable description; thereby to refresh the reader with long processions of spotless romances, bright and stately, like so many frontispieces in *La Belle Assemblée*, with cheeks of the fairest carnation, lips of the gentlest curvature, and most perfect Grecian noses, and no shade of character or meaning to mar their pure idealness. But so long as our Minerva Press and its many branch-establishments do their duty, to import ware of that sort into these Islands seems unnecessary.

On the whole, as the light of a very small taper may be useful in total darkness, I have sometimes hoped that this little enterprise might assist, in its degree, to forward an acquaintance with the Germans and their literature; a literature and a people both well worthy of our study. Translations, in this point of view, can be of little avail, except in so far as they excite us to a much more general study of the language. The difficulties of German are little more than a bugbear: they can only be compared to those of Greek by persons claiming praise or pudding

for having mastered them. Three months of moderate diligence will carry any man, almost without assistance of a master, over its prime obstacles; and the rest is play rather than labour.

To judge from the signs of the times, this general diffusion of German among us seems a consummation not far distant. As an individual, I cannot but anticipate from it some little evil and much good; and look forward with pleasure to the time when a people who have listened with the most friendly placidity to criticisms[3] of the slenderest nature from us, may be more fitly judged of; and thirty millions of men, speaking in the same old Saxon tongue, and thinking in the same old Saxon spirit with ourselves, may be admitted to the rights of brotherhood which they have long deserved, and which it is we chiefly that suffer by withholding.

MUSÆUS.

JOHANN AUGUST MUSÆUS was born in the year 1735, at Jena, where his father then held the office of Judge. The quick talents, and kind lively temper of the boy, recommended him to the affection of his uncle, Herr Weissenborn, Superintendant at Allstadt, who took him to his house, and treated him in all respects like a son. Johann was then in his ninth year: a few months afterwards, his uncle was promoted to the post of General Superintendant at Eisenach; a change which did not alter the domestic condition of the nephew, though it replaced him in the neighbourhood of his parents; for his father had also been transferred to Eisenach, in the capacity of Councillor and Police Magistrate. With this hospitable relative he continued till his nineteenth year.

Old Weissenborn had no children of his own, and he determined that his foster-child should have a liberal education. In due time he placed him at the University of Jena, as a student of theology. It is not likely that the inclinations of the youth himself had been particularly consulted in this arrangement; nevertheless he appears to have studied with sufficient diligence; for in the usual period of three years and a half, he obtained his degree of Master, and what was then a proof of more than ordinary merit, was elected a member of the *German Society*. With these titles, and the groundwork of a solid culture, he returned to Eisenach, to wait for an appointment in the Church, of which he was now licentiate.

For several years, though he preached with ability, and not without approval, no appointment presented itself; and when at last a country-living in the neighbourhood of Eisenach was offered him, the people

[3] Voltaire's patronising letter to Ramler, in which he condescends to grant the Germans some privileges of literary citizenship, on the strength of "Monsieur Gottched" (Gottsched, long ago acknowledged as the true German Antichrist of Wit), is still held in remembrance; so likewise is the Père Bouhours's extremely satirical inquiry, *Si un Allemand peut avoir de l'esprit?*

stoutly resisted the admission of their new pastor, on the ground, says his Biographer, that "he had once been seen dancing." It may be, however, that the sentence of the peasants was not altogether so infirm as this its alleged very narrow basis would betoken: judging from external circumstances, it by no means appears that devotion was at any time the chief distinction of the new candidate; and to a simple rustic flock, his shining talents, unsupported by zeal, would be empty and unprofitable as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. At all events, this hindrance closed his theological career: it came in good season to withdraw him from a calling, in which, whether willingly or unwillingly adopted, his history must have been dishonest and contemptible, and his gifts could never have availed him.

Musäus had now lost his profession; but his resources were not limited to one department of activity, and he was still young enough to choose another. His temper was gay and kindly; his faculties of mind were brilliant, and had now been improved by years of steady industry. His residence at Eisenach had not been spent in scrutinising the phases of church preferment, or dancing attendance on patrons and dignitaries: he had stored his mind with useful and ornamental knowledge; and from his remote watch-tower, his keen eye had discerned the movements of the world, and firm judgments of its wisdom and its folly were gathering form in his thoughts. In his twenty-fifth year he became an author; a satirist, and, what is rarer, a just one. Germany, by the report of its enemies and lukewarm friends, is seldom long without some Idol; some author of superhuman endowments, some system that promises to renovate the earth, some science destined to conduct, by a north-west passage, to universal knowledge. At this period, the Brazen Image of the day was our English Richardson; his novels had been translated into German with unbounded acceptance;[4] and *Grandison* was figuring in many weak heads as the sole model of a true Christian gentleman. Musäus published his *German Grandison* in 1760; a work of good omen as a first attempt, and received with greater favour than the popularity of its victim seemed to promise. It coöperated with Time in removing this spiritual epidemic; and appears to have survived its object, for it was reprinted in 1781.

The success of his anonymous parody, however gratifying to the youthful author, did not tempt him to disclose his name, and still less to think of literature as a profession. With his cool sceptical temper, he was little liable to over-estimate his talents, or the prizes set up for them; and he longed much less for a literary existence than for a civic one. In 1763, his wish to a certain extent was granted: he became Tutor of the Pages in the court of Weimar; which office, after seven punctual and laborious years, he exchanged for a professorship in the *Gymnasium*, or public school of the same town. He had now married; and amid the cares and pleasures of providing for a family, and keeping

[4] See the Letters of Meta, Klopstock's lady, in *Richardson's Life and Correspondence.*

house like an honest burgher, the dreams of fame had faded still farther from his mind. The emoluments of his post were small; but his heart was light, and his mind humble: to increase his income he gave private lessons in history and the like, "to young ladies and gentlemen of quality;" and for several years took charge of a few boarders. The names of Wieland and Goethe had now risen on the world, while his own was still under the horizon: but this obscurity, enjoying as he did the kind esteem of all his many personal acquaintances, he felt to be a very light evil; and participated without envy in whatever entertainment or instruction his famed contemporaries could afford him. With literature he still occupied his leisure; he had read and reflected much; but for any public display of his acquirements he was making no preparation, and feeling no anxiety.

After an interval of nineteen years, the appearance of a new idol again called forth his iconoclastic faculty. Lavater had left his parsonage among the Alps, and set out on a cruise over Europe, in search of proselytes and striking physiognomies. His theories, supported by his personal influence, and the honest rude ardour of his character, became the rage in Germany; and men, women and children were immersed in promoting philanthropy, and studying the human mind. Whereupon Musäus grasped his satirical hammer; and with lusty strokes defaced and unshrined the false divinity. His *Physiognomical Travels*, which appeared in 1779, is still ranked by the German critics among the happiest productions of its kind in their literature; and still read for its wit and acuteness, and genial overflowing humour, though the object it attacked has long ago become a reminiscence. At the time of its publication, when everything conspired to give its qualities their full effect, the applause it gained was instant and general. The author had, as in the former case, concealed his name: but the public curiosity soon penetrated the secret, which he had now no interest in keeping; and Musäus was forthwith enrolled among the lights of his day and generation; and courteous readers crowded to him from far and near, to see his face, and pay him the tribute of their admiration. This unlooked-for celebrity he valued at its just price; continuing to live as if it were not; gratified chiefly in his character of father, at having found an honest means of improving his domestic circumstances, and enlarging the comforts of his family. The ground was now broken, and he was not long in digging deeper.

The popular traditions of Germany, so numerous and often so impressive, had attracted his attention; and their rugged Gothic vigour, saddened into sternness or venerable grace by the flight of ages, became dearer to his taste, as he looked abroad upon the mawkish deluge of Sentimentality, with which *The Sorrows of Werter* had been the innocent signal for a legion of imitators to drown the land. The spirit of German imagination seemed but ill represented by these tearful persons, who, if their hearts were full, minded little though their heads were empty: their spasmodic tenderness made no imposing figure beside the

gloomy strength, which might still in fragments be discerned in their distant predecessors. Of what has been preserved from age to age by living memory alone, the chance is that it possesses some intrinsic merit: its very existence declares it to be adapted to some form of our common nature, and therefore calculated more or less to interest all its forms. It struck Musäus that these rude traditionary fragments might be worked anew into shape and polish, and transferred from the hearths of the common people to the parlours of the intellectual and refined. He determined on forming a series of *Volksmährchen*, or Popular Traditionary Tales; a task of more originality and smaller promise in those days than it would be now. In the collection of materials he spared no pains; and despised no source of intelligence, however mean. He would call children from the street; become a child along with them, listen to their nursery tales, and reward his tiny narrators with a *dreyer* apiece. Sometimes he assembled a knot of old women, with their spinning-wheels, about him; and amid the hum of their industrious implements, gathered stories of the ancient time from the lips of the garrulous sisterhood. Once his wife had been out paying visits: on opening the parlour-door at her return, she was met by a villanous cloud of tobacco-smoke; and venturing forward through the haze, she found her husband seated by the stove, in company with an old soldier, who was smoking vehemently on his black stump of a pipe, and charming his landlord, between whiffs, with legendary lore.

The *Volksmährchen*, in five little volumes, appeared in 1782. They soon rose into favour with a large class of readers; and while many generations of novels have since that time been ushered into being, and conducted out of it, they still survive, increasing in popularity rather than declining. This preëminence is owing less to the ancient materials, than to the author's way of treating them. The primitive tradition often serves him only as a vehicle for interesting description, shrewd sarcastic speculation, and gay fanciful pleasantry, extending its allusions over all things past and present, now rising into comic humour, now sinking into drollery, often tasteless, strained, or tawdry, but never dull. The traces of poetry and earnest imagination, here and there discernible in the original fiction, he treats with levity and kind sceptical derision: nothing is required of the reader but what all readers are prepared to give. Since the publication of this work, the subject of popular tradition has been handled to triteness; *Volksmährchen* have been written and collected without stint or limit; and critics, in admitting that Musäus was the first to open this mine of entertainment, have lamented the incongruity between his subject and his style. But the faculty of laughing has been given to all men, and the feeling of imaginative beauty has been given only to a few; the lovers of primeval poetry, in its unadulterated state, may censure Musäus; but they join with the public at large in reading him.

This book of *Volksmährchen* established the character of its author for wit and general talent, and forms the chief support of his reputation with posterity. A few years after, he again appeared before the public

with a humorous performance, entitled *Friend Hein's Apparitions, in the style of Holberg*, printed in 1785. *Friend Hein* is a name under which Musäus, for what reason his commentator Wieland seems unable to inform us, usually personifies Death: the essay itself, which I have never seen, may be less irreverent and offensive to pious feeling than its title indicates, and it is said to abound with "wit, humour and knowledge of life," as much as any of his former works. He had also begun a second series of Tales, under the title of *Straussfedern* (Ostrich-feathers): but only the first volume had appeared, when death put a period to his labours. He had long been in weakly health; often afflicted with violent headaches: his disorder was a polypus of the heart, which cut him off on the 28th of October 1787, in the fifty-second year of his age. The *Straussfedern* was completed by another hand; and a small volume of *Remains*, edited by Kotzebue in 1791, concludes the list of his writings. A simple but tasteful memorial, we are told, was erected over his grave by some unknown friend.

Musäus was a practical believer in the Horatian maxim, *Nil admirari:* of a jovial heart and a penetrating well-cultivated understanding, he saw things as they were, and had little disposition or aptitude to invest them with any colours but their own. Without much effort, therefore, he stood aloof from every species of cant; and *was* the man he thought himself, and wished others to think him. Had his temper been unsocial and melancholic, such a creed might have rendered him spiteful, narrow and selfish: but nature had been kinder to him than education; he did not quarrel with the world, though he saw its barrenness, and knew not how to make it solemn any more than lovely; for his heart was gay and kind; and an imperturbable good-humour, more potent than a panoply of brass, defended him from the stings and arrows of outrageous Fortune to the end of his pilgrimage. Few laughers have walked so circumspectly, and acquired or merited so much affection. By profession a Momus, he looked upon the world as little else than a boundless Chase, where the wise were to recreate themselves with the hunting of Follies; and perhaps he is the only satirist on record of whom it can be said that his jesting never cost him a friend. His humour is, indeed, untinctured with bitterness; sportful, ebullient and guileless as the frolics of a child. He could not reverence men; but with all their faults he loved them; for they were his brethren, and their faults were not clearer to him than his own. He inculcated or entertained no lofty principles of generosity; yet though never rich in purse, he was always ready to divide his pittance with a needier fellow-man. Of vanity he showed little or none: in obscurity he was contented; and when his honours came, he wore them meekly, and was the last to see that they were merited. In society he was courteous and yielding; a universal favourite; in his chosen circle, the most fascinating of companions. From the slenderest trifle, he could spin a boundless web of drollery; and his brilliant mirth enlivened without wounding. With the foibles of others, he abstained from meddling; but among his friends, we are

informed, he could for hours keep the table in a roar, when, with his dry, inimitable vein, he started some banter on himself or his wife; and, in trustful abandonment, laid the reins on the neck of his fancy to pursue it. Without enthusiasm of character, or any pretension to high or even earnest qualities, he was a well-conditioned, laughter-loving, kindly man; led a gay, jestful life; conquering by contentment and mirth of heart the long series of difficulties and distresses with which it assailed him; and died regretted by his nation, as a forwarder of harmless pleasure; and by those that knew him better, as a truthful, unassuming, affectionate, and, on the whole, very estimable person.

His intellectual character corresponds with his moral and social one; not high or glorious, but genuine so far as it goes. He does not approach the first rank of writers; he attempts not to deal with the deeper feelings of the heart; and for instructing the judgment, he ranks rather as a sound, well-informed, common-sense thinker, than as a man of high wisdom or originality. He advanced few new truths, but he dressed many old ones in sprightly apparel; and it ought to be remembered, that he kept himself unspotted from the errors of his time: a merit which posterity is apt to underrate; for nothing seems more stolid than a past delusion; and we forget that delusions, destined also to be past, are now present with ourselves, about us and within us, which, were the task so easy, it is pity that we do not forthwith convict and cast away. Musäus had a quick vigorous intellect, a keen eye for the common forms of the beautiful, a fancy ever prompt with allusions, and an overflowing store of sprightly and benignant humour. These natural gifts he had not neglected to cultivate by study both of books and things; his reading distinguishes him even in Germany; nor does he bear it about him like an ostentatious burden, but in the shape of spiritual strength and plenty derived from it. As an author, his beauties and defects are numerous and easily discerned. His style sparkles with metaphors, sometimes just and beautiful, often new and surprising; but it is laborious, unnatural, and diffuse. Of his humour, his distinguishing gift, it may be remarked, that it seems copious rather than fine, and originates rather in the understanding than in the character: his heart is not delicate, or his affections tender; but he loves the ludicrous with true passion; and seeing keenly, if he feels obtusely, he can choose with sufficient skill the point of view from which his object shall appear distorted, as he requires it. This is the humour of a Swift or a Voltaire, but not of a Cervantes, or even of a Sterne in his best passages; it may produce a *Zadig* or a *Battle of the Books;* but not a *Don Quixote* or a *Corporal Trim*. Musäus is, in fact, no poet; he can see, and describe with rich graces what he sees; but he is nothing, or very little, of a Maker. His imagination is not powerless: it is like a bird of feeble wing, which can fly from tree to tree; but never soars for a moment into the æther of Poetry, to bathe in its serene splendour, with the region of the Actual lying far below, and brightened into beauty by radiance not its own. He is a man of fine and varied talent, but scarcely of any genius.

These characteristics are apparent enough in his Popular Tales; they may be traced even in the few specimens of that work, by which he is now introduced to the English reader. As has been already stated, his *Volksmährchen* exhibit himself much better than his subject. He is not admitted by his critics to have seized the finest spirit of this species of fiction, or turned it to the account of which it is capable in other hands. Whatever was austere or earnest, still more, whatever bordered upon awe or horror, his riant fancy rejected with aversion: the rigorous moral sometimes hid in these traditions, the grim lines of primeval feeling and imagination to be traced in them, had no charms for him. These ruins of the remote time he has not attempted to complete into a perfect edifice, according to the first simple plan; he has rather pargetted them anew, and decorated them with the most modern ornaments and furniture; and he introduces his guests, with a roguish smile at the strange antic contrast they are to perceive between the movables and the apartment. Sometimes he rises into a flight of simple eloquence, and for a sentence or two seems really beautiful and affecting; but the knave is always laughing in his sleeve at our credulity, and returns with double relish to riot at will in his favourite domain.

Of the three Tales here offered to the reader,[5] nothing need be said in explanation: for their whole significance, with all their beauties and blemishes, lies very near the surface. I have selected them, as specimens at once of his manner and his materials; in the hope, that, conveying some impression of a gifted and favourite writer, they may furnish a little entertainment both to the lovers of intellectual novelty and of innocent amusement. To neither can I promise very much: Musäus is a man of sterling powers, but no literary monster; and his Tales, though smooth and glittering, are cold; they have beauty, yet it is the beauty not of living forms, but of well-proportioned statues. Meanwhile, I have given him as I found him, endeavouring to copy faithfully; changing nothing, whether I might think it good or bad, that my skill enabled me to keep unchanged. With all drawbacks, I anticipate some favour for him: but his case admits no pleading; being clear by its own light, it must stand or fall by a first judgment, and without the help of advocates.

FRIEDRICH DE LA MOTTE FOUQUÉ.

THE Baron Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué is of French extraction, but distinguished for the true Germanism of his character, both as a writer and a man; and ranks, for the last twenty years, among the most popular and productive authors of his country.

His family, expelled from France by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantz, appears to have settled at the Hague; from which this branch

[5] 1. *Dumb Love*; 2. *Libussa*; 3. *Melechsala*.

of it was transferred to Prussia by the fortunes of our Author's grandfather, whose name and title the present Baron has inherited. This first Friedrich, born in the early part of last century, had been sent in boyhood to the Court of Anhalt-Dessau, in the character of Page: he soon quitted this station; entered the Prussian army as a private volunteer; by merit, or recommendation, was gradually advanced; and became acquainted with the Prince Royal, then a forlorn, oppressed and discontented youth, but destined afterwards to astonish and convulse the world, under the name of Frederick the Great. Young La Motte stood in high favour with Frederick; and seems likewise to have shown some prudence in humouring the jealous temper of the old King; for during the Prince's arrest, which had followed his projected elopement from paternal tuition, the Royal Shylock, instead of beheading La Motte, as he had treated poor De Catt, permitted him to visit the disconsolate prisoner, and without molestation to do him kind offices. On his accession to the throne, Frederick the King did not fail, in this instance, to remember the debts of Frederick the Prisoner: the friend of his youth continued to be the friend of his manhood and age; La Motte rose rapidly from post to post in the army, till, having gained the rank of General, he had opportunity, by various gallant services in the Seven-Years War, to secure the prosperity of his household, and earn for himself a place in the military history of his new country. With his Sovereign he continued in a kindly and honest relation throughout his whole life. His Letters, preserved in Frederick's Works, are a proof that he was not only favoured but esteemed: the imperious King is said to have respected his upright and truthful nature; and, though himself a sceptic and a scoffer, never to have interfered in word or deed with the piety and strict religious persuasions of his servant. The General became the founder of that Prussian family, which has since acquired a new and fairer distinction in the person of his grandson.

The present Friedrich, our Author, was born on the 11th of February 1777. Of his early history or habits we have no account, except that he was educated by Hülse; and soon sent to the army as an officer in the Royal Guards. In this capacity he served, during his nineteenth year, in the disastrous campaign of the Rhine. One of his brother officers and intimates here was Heinrich von Kleist, a noble-minded and ill-fated man of genius, whom the mismanagement of a too impetuous and feeling heart has since driven to suicide, before the world had sufficiently reaped the bright promise of his early years.

The misfortunes of his country drove Fouqué back into retirement: while Prussia languished in hopeless degradation under the iron sway of France, he kept himself apart from military life; settled in the country, and hanging up his ineffectual sword, devoted himself to domestic cares and joys, and in the Kingdoms of Imagination sought refuge from the aspect of actual oppression and distress. Of a temper susceptible, lively and devout, his faculties had been quickened by communion with kindred minds; and still more by collision with the vast events which had

filled the world with astonishment, and his portion of it with darkness and obstruction. At this juncture, while contemplating a literary life, it was doubtless a circumstance of no small influence on his future efforts that he became acquainted with August Wilhelm Schlegel. By Schlegel he was introduced to the study of Spanish Poetry; a fact from which a skilful theoriser might plausibly enough deduce the whole psychological history of Fouqué; for it seems as if the beautiful and wondrous spirit of this literature, so fervent yet so joyful, so solemn yet so full of blandishment, with its warlike piety, and gay chivalrous pomp, had taken entire possession of his mind, and moulded his unsettled powers into the form which they have ever since retained. One thing, at all events, is clear without help of theory: An ideal of Christian Knighthood, whencesoever borrowed or derived, has all along, with more or less distinctness, hovered round his fancy; and this it has been the constant task not only of his pen to represent in poetical delineations, but also of his life to realise in external conduct. As to its origin, whether in the poetry of Spain, or in the perplexities of a suffering and religious life, or in the French Revolution and its reaction on a temper abhorrent of its material principles, or in any or all of these causes, it were unprofitable to inquire; for the problem is of no vital importance, and we have not data for even an approximate solution.

Fouqué published his first works under the pseudonym of Pellegrin: he translated the *Numancia* of Cervantes; he wrote *Sigurd, Alwin, The History of Ritter Galmy:* a small volume of *Dramatic Tales* was published for him by his friend Schlegel. These performances are all of a chivalry cast; attempts to body forth the sentiment with which our Author's mind was already almost exclusively pervaded. Their success was incomplete; sufficient to indicate their object, but not to attain it. The models which he had in view seem still to have awed and overshadowed his poetic faculty; his productions have a southern exotic aspect; and in the opinion of his critics, it is only in glimpses that a genuine inspiration can be discerned in them. *Der Held des Nordens* (The Hero of the North), a dramatic work in three parts, grounded on the story of the *Niebelungen Lied*, was the first performance sent forth in his own name; and also the first which showed his genius in its own form, or produced any deep impression on the public. This work was acknowledged to be of true northern growth: it found applauding readers, and had the honour to be criticised in the *Heidelberger Jahrbücher*, by no meaner a person than Jean Paul Friedrich Richter, who bestowed on the poet the surname of *Der Tapfere*, or *The Valiant*, in allusion to the quality which seemed to be the soul of his own character, and of the characters which he portrayed.

The ground thus gained, La Motte Fouqué has not been negligent to make good and extend. Since the date of his first appearance, year after year has duly added its tribute of volumes to the list of his works; he has written in verse and prose, in narrative and representation; his productions varying in form through all the extremes of variety, but

animated by the same old spirit, that of Knighthood and Religion. On the whole, he seems to have continued growing in esteem, both with the lower and the upper classes of the literary world. His *Zauberring* (Magic Ring) has lately been translated into English: we have also versions of his *Sintram* and his *Undine*. The last little work, published in 1811, has become a literary pet in its own country; being dandled and patted not only by the soft hands of poetical maidens, but even by the horny paws of *Recensents*, a class of beings to the full as dire and doughty as our own Reviewers. *Undine* and *Sintram* are parts of a series or circuit of "Romantic fictions," entitled the *Jahreszeiten* (Seasons), which were published successively at four different periods: it is from the same work, the Autumn Number of it, that *Aslauga's Knight*, the Tale which follows this Introduction, has been extracted.

The poet had now wedded: and we figure him as happy in his own Arcadian seclusion; for his lady is a woman of kindred genius, and has added new celebrity to his name by various writings, partly of her own, partly in concert with her husband. In 1813, his poetic leisure was interrupted by the clang of battle-trumpets. Napoleon's star had begun to decline; and Prussia rose, as one man, to break asunder the fetters with which he had so long chained Europe to the dust. The knightly Baron was the first to rouse himself at the voice of his country; he again girded on his harness, and took the field at the head of a small troop of volunteers. His little band would seem to have been joined with the Jäger (or, as we call it, Chasseur) Regiment of Brandenburg Cuirassiers; in which squadron he served, first as Lieutenant, then as Rittmeister, with the devout and fervid gallantry, which he had so often previously delineated in his writings. Like the lamented Körner, he stood by the cause both with "the Lyre and the Sword." His arm was ever in the hottest of the battle; and his songs uplifted the triumph of victory, or breathed fresh ardour into the hearts of his comrades in defeat. These lyrical effusions have since been collected and published: for the future historian they will form an interesting memorial. At Culm, the poetical soldier was wounded; but the incompleteness of his cure did not prevent him from appearing in his place on the great day of Leipzig; and thenceforward following the scattered enemy to the banks of the Rhine. Here ill health, arising from excessive exertion, forced him to return: he had toiled faithfully till the struggle was decided; and could now, with a quiet mind, leave others to complete the task. By the King he was raised to the rank of Major, and decorated with the cross of the Order of St. John. He retired to his former residence at Rennhausen, near Rathenau; betook himself again to writing, with unabated diligence; and has since produced, among various other chivalry performances of greater or smaller extent, an "epic poem," entitled *Corona*, celebrating the events in which he himself was present and formed part. Here, so far as I have understood, he still chiefly resides; enjoying an enviable lot; the domestic society of a virtuous and gifted wife; the exercise of a poetic genius, which his brethren repay with praise; and still dearer

honours as a man and a citizen, which his own conscience may declare that he has merited.

Fouqué's genius is not of a kind to provoke or solicit much criticism; for its faults are negative rather than positive, and its beauties are not difficult to discern. The structure of his mind is simple; his intellect is in harmony with his feelings; and his taste seems to include few modes of excellence, which he has not in some considerable degree the power to realise. He is thus in unison with himself; his works are free from internal inconsistency, and appear to be produced with lightness and freedom. A pure sensitive heart, deeply reverent of Truth, and Beauty, and Heroic Virtue; a quick perception of certain forms embodying these high qualities; and a delicate and dainty hand in picturing them forth, are gifts which few readers of his works will contest him. At the same time, it must be granted, he has no preëminence in strength, either of head or heart; and his circle of activity, though full of animation, is far from comprehensive. He is, as it were, possessed by one idea. A few notes, some of them, in truth, of rich melody, yet still a very few, include the whole music of his being. The Chapel and the Tilt-yard stand in the background or the foreground, in all the scenes of his universe. He gives us knights, soft-hearted and strong-armed; full of Christian self-denial, patience, meekness and gay easy daring; they stand before us in their mild frankness with suitable equipment, and accompaniment of squire and dame; and frequently the whole has a true, though seldom a vigorous, poetic life. If this can content us, it is well: if not, there is no help; for change of scene and person brings little change of subject; even when no chivalry is mentioned, we feel too clearly the influence of its unseen presence. Nor can it be said, that in this solitary department his success is of the very highest sort. To body forth the spirit of Christian Knighthood in existing poetic forms; to wed that old *sentiment* to modern *thoughts*, was a task which he could not attempt. He has turned rather to the fictions and machinery of former days; and transplanted his heroes into distant ages, and scenes divided by their nature from our common world. Their manner of existence comes imaged back to us faint and ineffectual, like the crescent of the setting moon.

These things, however, are not faults, but the want of merits. Where something is effected, it were ungracious to reckon up too narrowly how much is left untried. In all his writings, Fouqué shows himself as a man deeply imbued with feelings of religion, honour and brotherly love; he sings of Faith and Affection with a full heart; and a spirit of tenderness, and vestal purity, and meek heroism, sheds salutary influences from his presence. He is no primate or bishop in the Church Poetical; but a simple chaplain, who merits the honours of a small but well-discharged function, and claims no other.

In mental structure, Fouqué seems the converse of Musäus, whom he follows in the present volume. If Musäus was a man of talent, with little genius, Fouqué is a man of genius, with little more than an ordinary share of talent. His intellect is not richer or more powerful than that

of common minds, nor his insight into the world and man's heart more keen; but his feelings are finer, and the touch of an aerial fancy gives life and loveliness to the products of his other powers. Among English authors, we might liken him to Southey; though their provinces of writing are widely diverse; and in regard to general culture and acquirement, the latter must be reckoned greatly his superior. Like Southey, he *finds* more readily than he *invents;* and his invention, when he does trust to it, is apt to be daring rather than successful. Yet his extravagant fictions are pervaded by a true sentiment; a soft vivifying soul looks through them; a religious submission, a cheerful and unwearied patience in affliction; mild, earnest hope and love, and peaceful subdued enthusiasm.

To these internal endowments he adds the merit of a style by no means ill adapted for displaying them. Lightness and simplicity are its chief characteristics: his periods move along in lively rhythm; studiously excluding all pomp of phraseology; expressing his strongest thoughts in the humblest words, and veiling dark sufferings or resolute purposes in a placid smile. A faint superficial gaiety seems to rest over all his images: it is not merriment or humour; but the self-possession of a man too earnestly serious to be heedful of solemn looks; and it plays like sunshine on the surface of a dark pool, deepening by contrast the impressiveness of the gloom which it does not penetrate.

If this little Tale of *Aslauga's Knight*[6] afford any tolerable emblem of those qualities, the reader will not grudge perusing it. I pretend not to offer it as the best of Fouqué's writings, but only as the best I know of for my present purpose. *Sintram* and *Undine* are already in our language: this tale is weaker in result, but also shorter in compass. That its chivalry is of a still wilder sort than that which we supposed Cervantes had abolished two centuries ago; that its form is thin and unsubstantial, and its effect unsatisfactory, I need not attempt to deny. An extravagant fiction for the basis; delicate, airy and beautiful delineations in the detail; and the everlasting principles of Faith, and Integrity, and Love, pervading the whole: such is frequently the character of Fouqué's writings; and such, on a smaller scale, appears to be that of *Aslauga's Knight*, which is now, with all its imperfections on its head, to be submitted to the courtesy of English judges.

LUDWIG TIECK.

Ludwig Tieck, born at Berlin on the 31st of May 1773, is known to the world only as a Man of Letters, having never held any public station, or followed any profession, except that of authorship. Of his private history the critics and news-hunters of his own country complain that they have little information; a deficiency which may arise in part from the circumstance, that till of late years, though from the first ad-

[6] Our only Translation from Fouqué.

mired by the Patricians of his native literature, he has stood in no high favour, and of course awakened no great curiosity, among the reading *Plebs;* and may indicate, at the same time, that in his walk and conversation there is little wonderful to be discovered.

His literary life he began at Berlin, in his twenty-second year, by the publication of three Novels, following each other in quick succession: *Abdallah, William Lovell* and *Peter Leberrecht.* These works found small patronage at their first appearance, and are still regarded as immature products of his genius; the opening of a cloudy as well as fervid dawn; betokening a day of strong heat, and perhaps at last of serene brightness. A gloomy tragic spirit is said to reign throughout all of them; the image of a high passionate mind, scorning the base and the false, rather than accomplishing the good and the true; in rapt earnestness 'interrogating Fate,' and receiving no answer, but the echo of its own questions reverberated from the dead walls of its vast and lone imprisonment.

In this stage of spiritual progress, where so many not otherwise ungifted minds at length painfully content themselves to take up their permanent abode, where our own noble and hapless Byron perished from among us at the instant when his deliverance seemed at hand, it was not Tieck's ill fortune to continue too long. His *Popular Tales,* published in 1797 as an appendage to his last Novel, under the title of *Peter Leberrechts Volksmährchen,* already indicate that he had worked his way through these baleful shades into a calmer and sunnier elevation; from which, and happily without looking at the world through a painted glass of any sort, he had begun to see that there were things to be believed, as well as things to be denied; things to be loved and forwarded, as well as things to be hated and trodden under foot. The active and positive of Goodness was displacing the barren and tormenting negative; and worthy feelings were now to be translated into their only proper language, worthy actions. In Tieck's mind, all Goodness, all that was noble or excellent in Nature, seems to have combined itself under the image of Poetic Beauty; to the service and defence of which he has ever since unweariedly devoted his gifts and his days.

These *Volksmährchen* are of the most varied nature: sombre, pathetic, fantastic, satirical; but all pervaded by a warm genial soul, which accommodates itself with equal aptitude to the gravest or the gayest form. A soft abundance, a simple and kindly but often solemn majesty is in them: wondrous shapes, full of meaning, move over the scene, true modern denizens of the old Fairyland; low tones of plaintiveness or awe flit round us; or a starry splendour twinkles down from the immeasurable depths of Night.

It is by this work, as revised and perfected long afterwards, that we now purpose introducing Tieck to the notice of the English reader: it was by this also that he was introduced to the notice of his countrymen. *Peter Leberrechts Volksmährchen* was reviewed by August Wilhelm Schlegel in the Jena *Litteraturzeitung;* and its author, for the first

time, brought under the eye of the world as a man of rich endowments, and in the fair way for turning them to proper account. To the body of the world, however, this piece of news was surprising rather than delightful; for Tieck's merits were not of a kind to split the ears of the groundlings, and his manner of producing them was ill calculated to conciliate a kind hearing. Schiller and Goethe were at this time silent, or occupied with History and Philosophy: Tieck belonged not to the existing poetic guild; and, far from soliciting admission, he had not scrupled, in the most pleasant fashion, to inform the craftsmen that their great Diana was a dumb idol, and their silver shrines an unprofitable thing. Among these *Volksmährchen* one of the most prominent is *Der gestiefelte Kater*, a dramatised version of *Puss in Boots;* under the grotesque masque of which, he had laughed with his whole heart, in a true Aristophanic vein, at the actual aspect of literature; and without mingling his satire with personalities, or any other false ingredient, had rained it like a quiet shower of volcanic ashes on the cant of Illumination, the cant of Sensibility, the cant of Criticism, and the many other cants of that shallow time, till the gumflower products of the poetic garden hung draggled and black under their unkindly coating. In another country, at another day, the drama of *Puss in Boots* may justly be supposed to appear with enfeebled influences; yet even to a stranger there is not wanting a feast of broad joyous humour in this strange phantasmagoria, where pit and stage, and man and animal, and earth and air, are jumbled in confusion worse confounded, and the copious, kind, ruddy light of true mirth overshines and warms the whole.

This What-d'ye-call-it of *Puss in Boots* was, as it were, the keynote which for several years determined the tone of Tieck's literary enterprises. The same spirit lives in his *Verkehrte Welt* (World turned Topsy-turvy), a drama of similar structure, which accompanied the former; in his tale of *Zerbino, or the Tour in search of Taste*, which soon followed it; and in numerous parodies and lighter pieces which he gave to the world in his *Poetic Journal;* the second and last volume of which periodical contains his *Letters on Shakspeare*, inculcating the same doctrines, in a graver shape. About this time, after a short residence in Hamburg, where he had married, he removed his abode to Jena; a change which confirmed him in his literary tendencies, and facilitated the attainment of their objects. It was here that he became acquainted with the two Schlegels; and, at the same time, with their friend Novalis, a young man of a pure, warm and benignant genius, whose fine spirit died in its first blossoming, and whose posthumous works it was, ere long, the melancholy task of Tieck and the younger Schlegel to publish under their superintendence. With Wackenroder of Berlin, a person of kindred mind with Novalis, and kindred fortune also, having died very early, Tieck was already acquainted and united; for he had coöperated in the *Herzensergiessungen eines einsamen Klosterbruders*, an elegant and impressive work on pictorial art, and Wackenroder's chief performance.

These young men sympathised completely in their critical ideas with Tieck; and each was labouring in his own sphere to disseminate them, and reduce them to practice. Their endeavours, it would seem, have prospered; for in colloquial literary history, this gifted cinquefoil, often it is only the trefoil of Tieck and the two Schlegels, have the credit, which was long the blame, of founding a New School of Poetry, by which the Old School, first fired upon in the *Gestiefelte Kater*, and ever afterwards assailed, without intermission, by eloquence and ridicule, argument and entreaty, was at length displaced and hunted out of being; or, like Partridge the Astrologer, reduced to a life which could be proved to be no life.

Of this New School, which has been the subject of much unwise talk, and of much not very wise writing, we cannot here attempt to offer any suitable description, far less any just estimate. One thing may be remarked, that the epithet *School* seems to describe the case with little propriety. That since the beginning of the present century, a great change has taken place in German literature, is plain enough, without commentators; but that it was effected by three young men, living in the little town of Jena, is not by any means so plain. The critical principles of Tieck and the Schlegels had already been set forth, in the form both of precept and prohibition, and with all the aids of philosophic depth and epigrammatic emphasis, by the united minds of Goethe and Schiller, in the *Horen* and *Xenien*. The development and practical application of the doctrine is all that pertains to these reputed founders of the sect. But neither can the change be said to have originated with Schiller and Goethe; for it is a change originating not in individuals, but in universal circumstances, and belongs not to Germany, but to Europe. Among ourselves, for instance, within the last thirty years, who has not lifted up his voice with double vigour in praise of Shakspeare and Nature, and vituperation of French taste and French philosophy? who has not heard of the glories of old English literature; the wealth of Queen Elizabeth's age; the penury of Queen Anne's; and the inquiry whether Pope was a poet? A similar temper is breaking out in France itself, hermetically sealed as that country seemed to be against all foreign influences; and doubts are beginning to be entertained, and even expressed, about Corneille and the Three Unities. It seems to be substantially the same thing which has occurred in Germany, and been attributed to Tieck and his associates: only that the revolution, which is here proceeding, and in France commencing, appears in Germany to be completed. Its results have there been embodied in elaborate laws, and profound systems have been promulgated and accepted: whereas with us, in past years, there has been as it were a Literary Anarchy; for the Pandects of Blair and Bossu are obsolete or abrogated, but no new code supplies their place; and, author and critic, each sings or says that which is right in his own eyes. For the principles of German Poetics, we can only refer the reader to the treatises of Kant, Schiller, Richter, the Schlegels, and their many copyists and expositors; with the

promise that his labour will be hard, but not unrewarded by a plenteous harvest of results, which, whether they be doubted, denied or believed, he will find no trivial or unprofitable subject for his contemplation.

These doctrines of taste, which Tieck embraced every opportunity of enforcing as a critic, he did not fail diligently to exemplify in practice; as a long and rapid series of poetical performances lies before the world to attest. Of these, his *Genoveva*, a Play grounded on the legend of that Saint, appears to be regarded as his masterpiece by the best judges; though *Franz Sternebalds Wanderungen*, the fictitious History of a Student of Painting, was more relished by others; and, as a critic tells us, 'here and there a low voice might be even heard voting that this 'novel equalled *Wilhelm Meister;* the peaceful clearness of which it 'however nowise attained, but only, with visible effort, strove to imitate.' In this last work he was assisted by Wackenroder. At an earlier period, he had come forth as a translator, with a new version of *Don Quixote:* he now appeared also as a commentator, with a work entitled *Minnelieder aus dem Schwabischen Zeitalter* (Minstrelsy of the Swabian Era), published at Berlin in 1803; with an able Preface, explaining the relation of these poets to Petrarca and the Troubadours. In 1804, he sent out his *Kaiser Octavianus*, a Story which, like the other works mentioned in this paragraph, I have never seen, but which I find praised by his countrymen in no very intelligible terms, as 'a fair revival of the old *Mährchen* ' (Traditionary Tale); in which, however, the poet moves freely, and ' has completed the cycle of the romance.' *Die Gemälde* (The Pictures), another of his fictions, has lately been translated into English.

Tieck's frequent change of place bespeaks less settledness in his domestic than happily existed in his intellectual circumstances. From Jena he seems to have again removed to Berlin; then to a country residence near Frankfort-on-Oder; which, in its turn, he quitted for a journey into Italy. In this classic country he found new facilities for two of his favourite pursuits: he employed himself, it is said, to good purpose, in the study of ancient and modern Art; to which, while in Rome, he added the examining of many old German manuscripts preserved in the Vatican Library. From his labours in this latter department, and elsewhere, his countrymen have not long ago obtained, in addition to the *Minstrelsy*, an *Altdeutsches Theater* (Old-German Theatre), in two volumes, with the hope of more. A collection of Old-German Poetry is still expected.

In 1806, he returned to Germany; first to Munich, then to his former retreat near Frankfort; but, for the next seven years, he was little heard of as an active member of the literary world; and the regret of his admirers was increased by intelligence that ill health was the cause of his inactivity. That this inactivity was more apparent than real, he has proved by his reappearance in new vigour, at a time when he finds a readier welcome and more willing audience. He has since published abundantly in various forms; as a translator, an editor, and a writer both of poetry and prose. In 1812, appeared his early *Volksmährchen*, retouched and improved, and combined into a whole, by conversations,

critical, disquisitionary and descriptive, in two volumes, entitled *Phantasus;* from which our present specimens of him are taken. His *Altdeutsches Theater* was followed by an *Altenglisches*, including the disputed plays of Shakspeare; a work gladly received by his countrymen, no less devoted admirers of Shakspeare than ourselves. Since that time, he has paid us a personal visit. In 1818, he was in London, and is said to have been well satisfied with his reception; which we cannot but hope was as respectful and kind as a guest so accomplished, and so friendly to England, deserved at our hands. The fruit of his residence among us, it seems, has already appeared in his writings. He has very lately given to the world a Novel on Shakspeare and his Times; in which he has not trembled to introduce, as acting characters, the great dramatist himself, with Marlowe, and various other poets of that age. Such is the report; which adds, that his work is admired in Germany; but that any copy of it has crossed the Channel, I have not heard. Of Tieck's present residence, or special pursuits, or economical circumstances, I am sorry to confess my entire ignorance. One little fact may perhaps be worth adding; that Sophie Bernhardi, an esteemed authoress, is his sister.

A very slight power of observation will suffice to convince us that Tieck is no ordinary man; but a true Poet, a Poet *born* as well as *made.* Of a nature at once susceptible and strong, he has looked over the circle of human interests with a far-sighted and piercing eye, and partaken deeply of its joy and woe; and these impressions on his heart or his mind have been like seed sown on fertile ground, ripening under the skyey influences into rich and varied luxuriance. He is no mere observer and compiler; rendering back to us, with additions or subtractions, the Beauty which existing things have of themselves presented to him; but a true Maker, to whom the actual and external is but the *excitement* for ideal creations, representing and ennobling its effects. His feeling or knowledge, his love or scorn, his gay humour or solemn earnestness, all the riches of his inward world, are pervaded and mastered by the living energy of the soul which possesses them; and their finer essence is wafted to us in his poetry, like Arabian odours on the wings of the wind.

But this may be said of all true poets; and each is distinguished from all by his individual characteristics. Among Tieck's, one of the most remarkable is his combination of so many gifts in such full and simple harmony. His ridicule does not obstruct his adoration; his gay Southern fancy lives in union with a Northern heart. With the moods of a longing and impassioned spirit he seems deeply conversant; and a still imagination, in the highest sense of that word, reigns over all his poetic world. Perhaps, on the whole, this is his distinguishing faculty; an imagination, not of the intellect, but of the character, not so much vague and gigantic as altogether void and boundless. A feeling as of desert vastness steals over us in what appeared to be a common scene; or in high passages, a fire as of a furnace glows in one small spot, under

the infinitude of darkness: Immensity and Eternity seem to rest over the bounded and quickly-fading.

His mind we should call well cultivated; for no part of it seems stunted in its growth, and it acts in soft unimpeded union. His heart seems chastened in the school of experience; fervid, yet meek and humble, heedful of good in mean forms, and looking for its satisfaction not in passive, but in active enjoyments. His poetical taste seems no less polished and pure: with all his mental riches and excursiveness, he merits in the highest degree the praise of chaste simplicity, both in conception and style. No man ever rejected more carefully the aid of exaggeration in word and thought, or produced more result by humbler means. Who could have supposed that a tragedy, no mock-heroic, but a real tragedy, calculated to affect and excite us, could have been erected on the groundwork of a nursery tale? Yet let any one read *Blaubart* in the *Phantasus*, and say whether this is not accomplished. Nor is Tieck's history of our old friend *Bluebeard* any Fairyland *George Barnwell;* but a genuine play, with comic as well as tragic life in it; 'a group of earnest figures, painted on a laughing ground,' and surprising us with poetical delight, where we looked for anything sooner.

In his literary life, Tieck has essayed many provinces, both of the imaginative and the intellectual world; but his own peculiar province seems to be that of the *Mährchen;* a word which, for want of a proper synonym, we are forced to translate by the imperfect periphrase of Popular Traditionary Tale. Here, by the consent of all his critics, including even the collectors of real *Mährchen*, he reigns without any rival. The true tone of that ancient time, when man was in his childhood, when the universe within was divided by no wall of adamant from the universe without, and the forms of the Spirit mingled and dwelt in trustful sisterhood with the forms of the Sense, was not easy to seize and adapt with any fitness of application to the feelings of modern minds. It was to penetrate into the inmost shrines of Imagination, where human passion and action are reflected in dim and fitful but deeply significant resemblances, and to copy these with the guileless humble graces which alone can become them. Such tales ought to be poetical, because they spring from the very fountains of natural feeling; they ought to be moral, not as exemplifying some current apophthegm, but as imaging forth in shadowy emblems the universal tendencies and destinies of man. That Tieck has succeeded thus far in his Tales is not asserted by his warmest admirers; but only that he now and then approaches such success, and throughout approaches it more closely than any of his rivals.

How far this judgment of Tieck's admirers is correct, our readers are now to try for themselves.[7] Respecting the reception of these Tales, I cannot boast of having any very certain, still less any very flattering presentiment. Their merits, such as they have, are not of a kind to force

[7] The Tales translated from Tieck are: 1. *The Fairhaired Eckbert;* 2. *The Trusty Eckart;* 3. *The Runenberg;* 4. *The Elves;* 5. *The Goblet.*

themselves on the reader; and to search for merits few readers are inclined. The ordinary lovers of witch and fairy matter will remark a deficiency of spectres and enchantments here, and complain that the whole is rather dull. Cultivated freethinkers again, well knowing that no ghosts or elves exist in this country, will smile at the crackbrained dreamer, with his spelling-book prose and doggrel verse, and dismiss him good-naturedly as a German Lake-poet. Alas, alas! Ludwig Tieck could also fantasy, 'like a drunk Irishman,' with great conveniency, if it seemed good to him; he can laugh too, and disbelieve, and set springes to catch woodcocks in manifold wise: but his present business was not this: nor, I fear, is the lover of witch matter, or the cultivated freethinker, likely soon to discover what it was.

Other readers there are, however, who will come to him in a truer and meeker spirit, and, if I mistake not, be rewarded with some touches of genuine poetry. For the credit of the stranger, I ought to remind them that he appears under many disadvantages. In the process of translation he has necessarily lost, and perhaps in more than the usual proportion; the childlike character of his style was apt to diverge into the childish; the nakedness of his rhymes, perhaps at first only wavering between simplicity and silliness, must in my hands too frequently have shifted nearer the latter. Above all, such works as his come on us unprepared; unprovided with any model[8] by which to estimate them, or any category under which to arrange them. Nevertheless, the present specimens of Tieck do exhibit some features of his mind; a few, but those, as it seems to me, its rarest and highest features: to such readers, and with such allowances, the *Runenberg*, the *Trusty Eckart* and their associates may be commended with some confidence.

E. T. W. HOFFMANN.

HOFFMANN'S *Life and Remains* have been published, shortly after his decease, and with an amplitude of detail corresponding rather to the popularity than to the intrinsic merit of the subject; for Hoffmann belongs to that too numerous class of vivid and gifted literary men, whose genius, never cultured or elaborated into purity, finds loud and sudden, rather than judicious or permanent admiration; and whose history, full of error and perplexed vicissitude, excites sympathising regret in a few, and unwise wonder in many. From this Work, which is honestly and modestly enough written, and has, to all appearance, been extensively read and approved of, I borrow most of the following particulars.

Ernst Theodor Wilhelm Hoffmann was born at Königsberg, in Prussia, on the 24th of January 1776. His father occupied a post of

[8] I have not forgotten Allan Cunningham's *Traditional Tales of the English and Scottish Peasantry;* a work full of kind fancy and soft glowing exuberance, and with traces of a genius which might rise into a far loftier and purer element than it has ever yet moved and lived in.

some dignity in the administration of Justice; the mother's relatives were also engaged in the profession of Law; most of them respectably, some of them with considerable influence and reputation. The elder Hoffmann is said to have been a man of talent; but his temper and habitudes were irregular; his wife was sickly, sensitive and perhaps querulous and uncompliant: in our Ernst their second child's third year, the parents discovered that they could not live together; and, apparently by mutual consent, dissolved their ill-assorted union. The father withdrew from Königsberg, to prosecute his legal and judicial engagements elsewhere; and seems to have troubled himself no farther about his offspring or old connexions: he died, several years after, at Insterburg, where he had been stationed as a Judge in the Criminal Court of the Oberland. The other parent retired with young Ernst to her mother's house, also in Königsberg; and there, in painful inaction, wore out seventeen sick and pitiable years, before death put a period to her sufferings. Prior to the separation, the elder child, also a boy, had gone astray into wicked courses, and at last set forth as an infant prodigal into the wide world. The two brothers never met, though the elder is said to be still in life.

Cut off from his natural guardians and directors, young Hoffmann seems to have received no adequate compensation for the want of them, and his early culture was but ill conducted. The grandmother, like her daughter, was perpetually sick, neither of the two almost ever stirring from their rooms. An uncle, retired with the barren title of Justizrath from an abortive practice of Law, took charge of the boy's education: but little Otto had no insight into the endowments or perversities of his nephew, and spent much fruitless effort in endeavouring to train the frolicsome urchin to a clock-work life like his own; for Otto lived by square and rule; his history was a rigid, strenuous, methodical procedure; of which, indeed, except the process of digestion, faithfully enough performed, the result, in Otto's case, was nothing. An unmarried aunt, the only other member of the family, the only member of it gifted with any share of sense, appears to have had a truer view of young Hoffmann; but she loved the little rogue too well; and her tenderness, though repaid by equal and continued tenderness on his part, perhaps hurt him more than the leaden constraint of his uncle. For the rest, the boy did not let the yoke lie too heavy on his shoulders: Otto, it is true, was his teacher, his chamber-mate and bed-mate; but every Thursday the little Justizrath went out to pay visits, and the pupil could then celebrate a day of bedlam jubilee: in a little while too, by superiority of natural cunning, he had sounded the Justizrath; and from his twelfth year, we are told, he scarcely ever spoke a word with him, except for purposes of mystification. In this prim circle, he grew up in almost complete isolation; for, by reason of its fantastic strictness, the household was visited by few; and except one boy, a nephew of the Author Hippel's, with whom he accidentally became acquainted, Hoffmann had no companion but his foolish uncle and his too fond aunt. With young Hippel his intimacy more and more increased; and it is pleasant to record of both,

that this early connexion continued unbroken, often warm and helpful, through many changes of fortune; Hoffmann's school-friend stood by his death-bed, and took his farewell of him with true heartfelt tears.

For classical instruction, he was early sent to the public school of Königsberg; but till his thirteenth or fourteenth year, he acquired no taste for these pursuits; and remained unnoticed by his teacher, and by all his schoolfellows, except Hippel, rather disrespected and disliked. Music and painting, in which also he had masters, were more to his taste: in a short while, he could fantasy to admiration on the harpsichord; and there was no comic visage in Königsberg which he had not sketched in caricature. His tiny stature (for in youth, as in manhood, he was little, and 'incredibly brisk') giving him an almost infantile appearance, added new wonder to these attainments; and so young Ernst became a musical and pictorial prodigy; to the no small comfort of Justizrath Otto, who delighted to observe that the little imp who had played him so many sorry tricks, and so often overset the steady machinery of his household economy, was turning out not a blackguard, but a genius.

With more prudence and regularity than could have been expected, Hoffmann betook himself, in due time, to preparing for the legal profession; to which, as if by hereditary destiny, he was appointed. In the Königsberg University, indeed he confessed that Kant's prelections were a dead letter to him, though it was at that time the fashion both for the wise and simple to be metaphysically transcendental: but he abstained from the riotous practices of his fellow-*bursche*, and pursued with strict fidelity the tasks by which he hoped ere long to gain an independent livelihood, and be delivered from the thraldom of his grandmother and Justizrath Otto. In this hope he laboured; allowing himself no recreation, except once a-week an evening of literary talk with his fellow-student Hippel, and an occasional glance into *Winkelmann*, or other works on Art, to which, as formerly, the better part of his nature was passionately devoted.

In 1795, he passed his first professional trial, and was admitted Auscultator of the Court of Königsberg: an establishment administrative as well as judicial; in which, however, owing to the pressure of applicants, it was impossible to give him full employment. This leisure, which, with so hot and impatient a spirit, hung heavy enough on his hands, he endeavoured to fill up with subsidiary pursuits: he gave private lessons in music; he painted wild landscapes, or grotesque figures, to which 'a bold alternation of colour and shade' gave a specific character; he talked of men and things with the most sportful fancy, or the most biting sarcasm: in fine, he wrote two Novels. One of these, at least, he had hoped to see in print; for a bookseller had received it with some expressions of encouragement: but after half a year, his fair manuscript was returned to him all soiled and creased, with an answer, that 'the *anonymity* of the work was likely to hurt its sale.' In the mean time, his situation had become still more perplexed by a private incident in the style of the *Nouvelle Héloïse*. One of his fair music-pupils was too lovely

and too soft-hearted: no marriage could be thought of between the parties, for she was far above him in rank; and the contradictions and entanglements of this affair so pained and oppressed him, that he longed with double vehemence to be out of Königsberg. At last, after much wavering and consulting, he snatched himself away, with a resolute, indeed almost heroic effort, from the unpropitious scene; and proceeded, in the summer of 1796, to Great Glogau in Silesia, where another uncle, a brother of Otto's, occupied a post in the Administration, and had promised to procure him employment.

In Great Glogau he did not find the composure which he was in search of; his uncle and his cousins treated him with great affection, and his labour was not irksome or unprofitable; but, in his letters, he complains incessantly of tedium, and other spiritual maladies; and, in 1798, he joyfully took leave of Silesia, following his uncle, who was now promoted to a higher legal post in Berlin. Here too the young jurist continued only for a short time. Having passed his third and last trial, the *examen rigorosum*, and this with no common applause, he was soon afterwards appointed Assessor of the Court at Posen, in South Prussia (Poland); whither he proceeded in March 1800.

With Hoffmann's removal to Poland begins a new era of his life: he was now director of his own actions, and unhappily he did not direct them well. At Berlin, and even at Great Glogau, he had been accustomed to enliven the routine of legal duty by the study of Art; for which the public collections of pictures, and the numerous professors of music, had in both cities afforded considerable opportunity. In Posen, these resources were abridged; there was little music, little painting; his official associates were dry weekday men, who worked hard at their desks, and lived hard when enfranchised from them; without taste for literature, or art of any kind, except it were the art of cookery and brewing. The Poles also were a lively, jolly people, and much addicted to 'strong Hungary wine.' Hoffmann yielded too far to the custom of the land; and here, it would seem, contracted habits of irregularity, from which he could never after get delivered. Another refuge against tedium, derived from his own peculiar resources, was even less to be excused. In private hours, he had condescended to become the scandalous chronicle of Posen, and to sketch a series of caricatures, exhibiting, under the most ludicrous yet recognisable aspects, a great number of individuals and transactions; sparing no rank or relation, where he fancied himself to have been provoked, or thought his satire might be expected to tell. On occasion of a masquerade, a gay companion, his future brother-in-law, equipped himself like an Italian hawker; and proceeding to the ball with this pestilent ware in his basket, distributed the pictures, each picture to some ill-wisher of the person whom it represented; and then vanished from the room. For the first half hour, there was a general triumph; which, on comparing notes, passed into a general wail. The author was speedily detected: his talent, the only thing admirable in the

transaction, betrayed him, and the punishment followed close on the offence. Intelligence was sent to Berlin; and the patent, lying ready for signature, which should have made him Rath (Councillor) at Posen, was changed for a similar appointment at Plozk; a change which, in all points, he regarded as an exile, but which his best friends could not help admitting that he had richly merited.

From Plozk he failed not to emit his *Tristia;* soliciting, with pressing earnestness, deliverance from this Polish Tomos. What was more to the purpose, he seems to have amended his conduct: he had married while in Posen; his wife, a fair Poless, was possessed of many graces, and of contentment and submissiveness without limit; and the husband was beginning to substitute the duties and enjoyments of domestic and studious life for the revelry and riot in which of late he had much too deeply mingled. In his official capacity, his assiduity and perseverance so far gained on his superiors, that at length, by the influence of Hippel and other friends, he was transferred from Plozk to Warsaw; after having spent two regretful but diligent and not unprofitable years in this provincial seclusion. In the summer of 1804, he hastened to his new destination, which his fancy had decked for him in all the colours of hope.

To Hoffmann, the Polish capital was like a vast perpetual masquerade; and for a time he enjoyed its exotic many-coloured aspect, the more from its contrast with his late way of life. His public duty was not difficult, and he performed it punctually; his salary sufficed him; there were theatres and music on every hand; and the streets were peopled with a motley tumult of the strangest forms: 'gay silken Polesses, 'talking and promenading over broad stately squares; the ancient vener-'able Polish noble, with moustaches, caftan, sash, and red or yellow 'boots; the new race equipped as Parisian *Incroyables;* with foreigners 'of every nation;' not excluding long-bearded Jews, puppetshow-men, monks and dancing-bears. In a little while, Hoffmann had formed some acquaintances among the human part of the throng; with one Hitzig, his colleague in office, he established a lasting intimacy. It began oddly enough: one day the two were walking home together from the Court, and engaged in laborious, stinted and formal conversation, when Hoffmann, asking the character of some individual, the other answered, in the words of Falstaff, that he was 'a fellow in buckram;' a phrase which enlightened the caustic visage of Hoffmann, at all times shy to strangers, and at once raised him into one of his brilliant communicative moods. This Hitzig, himself a man of talent and energy, was of great service in assisting Hoffmann's intellectual culture while at Warsaw, and stood by him afterwards in many difficult emergencies.

An enthusiast dilettante prepared a new source of interest to Hoffmann, by a scheme which he proposed of erecting a Musical Institution. By dint of great effort, the dilettante succeeded in procuring subscribers; first one deserted palace, then a larger one, was purchased for a hall of meeting: and Hoffmann, seeing that the scheme was really

to take effect, now entered into it with heart and hand. He planned the arrangement of the rooms in the New *Ressource:* for their decorations, he sketched cartoons, part of which were painted by other artists, part he himself painted; not forgetting to introduce caricature portraits of many honest subscribers, whom, by wings and tails, he disguised as sphinxes, gryphons and other mythological cattle. His time was henceforth divided between his Court and this Musical Ressource: here, perched on his scaffold, among his paint-pots, with the brush in his hand, and a bottle of Hungary by his side, he might, in free hours, be seen diligently working, and talking in the mean while to his friends assembled below. If called to any juridical function by any extraordinary mandate from the President, he would doff his painter's-jacket, clamber down from his scaffold, wash his hands, and, to the surprise of parties, transact their business as rapidly and correctly, as if he had known no other employment.

The Musical Ressource prospered beyond expectation: brilliant concerts were given; all that was fairest and gracefulest in Warsaw attending, or even assisting: Hoffmann officiated as leader in their performance; and, especially in Mozart's pieces, was allowed to have done his part with consummate skill. Ere long, however, these melodious festivities were abruptly closed. News came of the battle of Jena; Russian foreposts entered the city; Tartars, Cossacks, Bashkirs increased the chaos of its population. In due time arrived French envoys to treat of a surrender; the Prussians mounted guard with their knapsacks on; and one morning tidings spread over the city, that the Praga bridge of boats was on fire, that the Russians and Prussians were retiring on the one side, and Murat's advanced-guard entering by the other. The rest is easy to conceive: the Prussian government was at an end in Warsaw; Hoffmann's *Collegium* honestly divided the contents of their strongbox, then closed the partnership, and dispersed, each whither he listed, to seek safety and new employment.

To most of them this was a grievous stroke: not to Hoffmann. For him Warsaw was still a fine variegated spectacle; he had money enough for present wants; of the future he took little heed, or thought loosely that he could live by Art, and that Art was far better than Law. Leaving his large house, where his purse seemed hardly safe from military violence, he took refuge in the garret of the Musical Ressource: here was his pianoforte and a library, here his wife and only child; without, were Napoleon and his generals, reviews, *restaurateurs*, theatres, churches with musical monks; and abundance of fellow-loungers to attend him in these amusements. It was not till after a severe attack of fever, and the most visible contraction of his purse, that he seriously bethought him what he was to do. A sad enough outlook! For Art, which had seemed so benignant at a distance, was shy and inaccessible when actually applied to for bread. Hitzig had hastened off to Berlin, and there opened a bookshop, in hope of better times: but his accounts of musical profits in that city were discouraging; and for the journey to Vienna,

which he advised and gave letters to forward, Hoffmann had now no funds. His uncle in Berlin was dead; from little Otto nothing could be drawn: the perplexity was thickening, and the means of unravelling it were daily diminishing. For the present, he resolved to leave his wife and daughter at Posen with their relations, and to visit Berlin himself in quest of some employment.

In Berlin he could find no employment whatever, either as a portrait-painter, a teacher or a composer of music; meanwhile the last remnant of his cash, his poor six Friedrichs-d'or, were one night filched from his trunk; and news came from Posen, that his little Cecilia was dead, and his wife dangerously ill. In this extremity, his heart for a while had nigh failed him; but he again gathered courage, and made a fresh attempt. He published in the newspapers an advertisement, offering himself as Music-director, on the most moderate terms, in any theatre; and was happy enough, soon afterwards, to make an engagement of the kind he wished with the managers of the Bamberg stage, at that time under the patronage of the Count von Soden.

To an ordinary temper, this very humble preferment would have offered but a mortifying contrast with former affluence and official respectability: Hoffmann, however, saw in it the means of realising his long-cherished wish, a life devoted to Art; and hastened to his Bamberg musical appointment with gayer hopes than he had ever fixed on any other prospect. Had money or economical comfort been his chief object, he must have felt himself cruelly disappointed: mischance on mischance befell the Bamberg theatre; contradiction on the back of contradiction awaited the new Music-director, whose life, for the next seven years, differs in no outward respect from that of the most unprosperous strolling player. Nevertheless, he made no complaint; perhaps he really felt little sorrow. 'This must do,' writes he in his Diary, 'and it will do; for now I shall never more have a *Relatio ex Actis* to 'write while I live, and so the Fountain of all Evil is dried up.' In a wealthier station, he might have composed more operas, and painted more caricatures; but it is possible enough the world might never have heard of him as a writer. The fate of his first two Novels had perhaps disgusted him with authorship: his studies at least had long pointed to other objects; nor was it choice, but necessity, which now led him back to literature. After many stagnations, the Bamberg theatrical cash-box had at length become entirely insolvent; portrait-painting and music-teaching were inadequate to the support of even a frugal household: Hoffmann, who, in all his straits, appears to have disdained pecuniary assistance, now wrote to Rochlitz of Leipzig, Editor of the *Musicalische Zeitung* (Musical Chronicle), soliciting employment in this Work; and, by way of testimonial, transmitting some of his recent performances. The letter itself, written with the most fantastic drollery, was testimonial enough: Hoffmann was instantly and gladly accepted; and in ten days, two essays were prepared and despatched; the first of a long series, afterwards collected, enlarged, and given to the world under the

title of *Fantasiestücke in Callot's Manier* (Fantasy-pieces in the style of Callot[9]), with a preface by Jean Paul Friedrich Richter, to whom Hoffmann had paid a visit while at Bamberg.

The incipient author was delighted with his new task; and Rochlitz and his readers no less so with its execution. These *Fantasiestücke* turning chiefly on Music, exclusively on Art, were afterwards to make him known to the world as a brilliant and peculiar writer; and they served for the present to augment his scanty funds, to bring him into favour and employment as a musical composer, and at last to deliver him from Bamberg. In 1813, by the management of Rochlitz, he formed an engagement at Dresden, again as Music-director, in the theatre of one Seconda. This appointment he hailed as a most propitious change; but his theatrical career was not destined anywhere to be smooth. Misfortunes, almost destruction, overtook him even on his journey: Seconda he soon found to be a driveller; the opera shifted from Dresden to Leipzig, and from Leipzig to Dresden; the country was full of Cossacks and *Gendarmes*, and Hoffmann's operatic melodies were drowned in the loud clang of Napoleon's battles. Till the end of 1814, he led a life more chequered by hard vicissitudes than ever: now quarrelling with Seconda, now sketching caricatures of the French; now writing *Fantasies*, now looking at Battles; sometimes sick, often in danger, generally light of heart, and always short of money. The *Golden Pot*, one of the *Fantasiestücke*, which follows this Introduction, was begun in Dresden, shortly before the Battle of Leipzig, while the cannon of the Allies was bombarding the city; with grenadoes bursting at the writer's very hand, nay at last driving him from his garret into some safer shelter.

The revolution of Europe, which restored so many sovereigns to their thrones, restored Hoffmann to his chair of office. He arrived at Berlin in September 1814; was provided with employment; reinstated in his former rights of seniority; and two years afterwards promoted, in consequence, to be Rath in the *Kammergericht*, or Exchequer Court of the capital.

Hoffmann's situation, after all his buffetings, might now be considered enviable: the income of his post was amply sufficient, and its labour not excessive; his best friends were in his neighbourhood, Hitzig was working with him at the same table; his public conduct was irreprehensible, and his literary fame was rapidly spreading. The *Fantasiestücke* were already universally popular; the *Elixiere des Teufels* (Devil's Elixir, a Novel in two volumes, since translated into English) had just been given to the circulating libraries; and his Opera of *Undine*, which Fouqué had versified for Hoffmann's music, was brought

[9] Some of my readers may require to be informed that Jacques Callot was a Lorraine painter of the seventeenth century; a wild genius, whose *Temptation of St. Antony* is said to exceed in chaotic incoherence that of Teniers himself.

out on the Berlin stage with loud plaudits, and reviewed with praises by Weber himself. Hoffmann was happy; and had he been wise, might still have continued happy: but he was not wise, and in this cup of joy there lurked for him a deadly poison.

Berlin, like most other cities, prides itself in being somewhat of a modern Athens; and Hoffmann, the wonder of the day, was invited with the warmest blandishments to participate in its musical and literary *tea*. But in these polished circles Hoffmann prospered ill: he was sharp-tempered; vain, indeed, but transcendently vain; he required the wittiest talk or the most entire audience; and had a heart-hatred to inanity, however gentle and refined. When his company grew tiresome, he 'made the most terrific faces;' would answer the languishing raptures of some perfumed critic by an observation on the weather; would transfix half a dozen harmless dilettanti through the vitals, each on his several bolt; nay, in the end, give vent to his spleen by talking like a sheer maniac; in short, never cease till, one way or other, the hapless circle was reduced to utter desolation. To this intellectual beverage he was seldom twice invited; and ere long, the musical and literary Tea-urn was for him a closed fountain.

Yet Hoffmann could not do without society, without excitement, and now not well without exclusive admiration. His old friends he had not forsaken, for he seldom, and with difficulty, got intimate with a stranger; but their quiet life could not content him: it was clear that the enjoyment he sought was only to be found among gay laughter-loving topers, as a guest at their table, or still better, as their sovereign in the wine-house. 'The order of his life, from 1816, downwards,' says his Biographer, 'was this: on Mondays and Thursdays he passed his 'forenoons at his post in the Kammergericht; on other days at home, 'in working; the afternoons he regularly spent in sleep, to which, in 'summer, perhaps he added walking: the evenings and nights were de-'voted to the tavern. Even when out in company, while the other guests 'went home, he retired to the tavern to await the morning, before which 'time it was next to impossible to bring him home.' Strangers who came to Berlin went to see him in the tavern; the tavern was his study, and his pulpit, and his throne: here his wit flashed and flamed like an *Aurora Borealis*, and the table was forever in a roar; and thus, amid tobacco-smoke, and over coarse earthly liquor, was Hoffmann wasting faculties which might have seasoned the nectar of the gods.

Poor Hoffmann was on the highway to ruin; and the only wonder is, that with such fatal speed, he did not reach the goal even more balefully and sooner. His official duties were, to the last, punctually and irreproachably performed. He wrote more abundantly than ever; no Magazine Editor was contented without his contributions; the *Nachtstücke* (Night-pieces) were published in 1817; two years afterwards *Klein Zaches*, regarded (it would seem falsely) as a local satire; and at last, between 1819 and 1821, appeared in four successive volumes, the *Serapionsbrüder*, containing most of his smaller Tales, collected from various

fugitive publications, and combined together by dialogues of the *Serapion-brethren*, a little club of friends, which for some time met weekly in Hoffmann's house. The *Prinzessin Brambilla* (1821) is properly another *Fantasy-piece*. The *Lebensaussichten des Kater Murr* (Tom-cat Murr's Philosophy of Life), published in 1820 and 1821, was meant by the author as his masterwork; but the third volume is wanting; and the wild anarchy, musical and moral, said to reign in the first two, may forever remain unreconciled.

Meanwhile, Hoffmann's tavern orgies continued unabated, and his health at last sunk under them. In 1819, he had suffered a renewed attack of gout; from which, however, he had recovered by a journey to the Silesian baths. On his forty-fifth birthday, the 24th of January 1822, he saw his best and oldest friends, including Hitzig and Hippel, assembled round his table; but he himself was sick; no longer hurrying to and fro in hospitable assiduity, as was his custom, but confined to his chair, and drinking bath-water, while his guests were enjoying wine. It was his death that lay upon him, and a mournful lingering death. The disease was a *tabes dorsalis;* limb by limb, from his feet upwards, for five months, his body stiffened and died. Hoffmann bore his sufferings with inconceivable gaiety; so long as his hands had power, he kept writing; afterwards, he dictated to an amanuensis; and four of his Tales, the last, *Der Feind* (The Enemy), discontinued only some few days before his death, were composed in this melancholy season. He would not believe that he was dying, and he longed for life with inexpressible desire. On the evening of the 24th of June, his whole body to the neck had become stiff and powerless; no longer feeling pain, he said to his Doctor: "I shall soon be through it now."—"Yes," said the Doctor, "you will soon be through it." Next morning he was evidently dying: yet about eleven o'clock he awoke from his stupor; cried that he was well, and would go on with dictating the *Feind* that night; at the same time calling on his wife to read him the passage where he had stopt. She spoke to him in kind dissuasion: he was silent; he motioned to be turned towards the wall; and scarcely had this been done when the fatal sound was heard in his throat, and in a few minutes Hoffmann was no more.

Hoffmann's was a mind for which proper culture might have done great things: there lay in it the elements of much moral worth, and talents of almost the highest order. Nor was it weakness of Will that so far frustrated these fine endowments; for in many trying emergencies he proved that decision and perseverance of resolve were by no means denied him. Unhappily, however, he had found no sure principle of action; no Truth adequate to the guidance of such a mind. What in common minds is called Prudence, was not wanting, could this have sufficed; for it is to be observed, that so long as he was poor, so long as the fetters of everyday duty lay round him, Hoffmann was diligent, unblamable and even praiseworthy: but these wants once supplied, these fetters once cast off, his wayward spirit was without fit direction or re-

straint, and its fine faculties rioted in wild disorder. In the practical concerns of life he felt no interest: in religion he seems not to have believed, or even disbelieved; he never talked of it, or would hear it talked of: to politics he was equally hostile, and equally a stranger. Yet the wages of daily labour, the solace of his five senses, and the intercourse of social or gregarious life, were far from completing his ideal of enjoyment: his better soul languished in these barren scenes, and longed for some worthier home. This home, unhappily, he was not destined to find. He sought for it in the Poetry of Art; and the aim of his writings, so far as they have any aim, as they are not mere interjections, expressing the casual moods of his mind, was constantly the celebration and unfolding of this the best and truest doctrine which he had to preach. But here too his common failing seems to have beset him: he loved Art with a deep but scarcely with a pure love; not as the fountain of Beauty, but as the fountain of refined Enjoyment; he demanded from it not heavenly peace, but earthly excitement; as indeed through his whole life, he had never learned the truth that for human souls a continuance of passive pleasure is inconceivable, has not only been denied us by Nature, but cannot, and could not be granted.

From all this there grew up in Hoffmann's character something player-like, something false, brawling and tawdry, which we trace both in his writings and his conduct. His philosophy degenerates into levity, his magnanimity into bombast: the light of his fine mind is not sunshine, but the glitter of an artificial firework. As in Art, so in Life he had failed to discover that 'agreeable sensations' are not the highest good. His pursuit of these led him into many devious courses, and the close of his mistaken pilgrimage was—the tavern.

Yet if, in judging Hoffmann, we are forced to condemn him, let it be with mildness, with justice. Let us not forget, that for a mind like his the path of propriety was difficult to find, still more difficult to keep. Moody, sensitive and fantastic, he wandered through the world like a foreign presence, subject to influences of which common natures have happily no glimpse. A whole scale of the most wayward and unearthly humours stands recorded in his Diary: his head was forever swarming with beautiful or horrible chimeras; a common incident could throw his whole being into tumult, a distorted face or figure would abide with him for days, and rule over him like a spell. It was not things, but 'the shows of things,' that he saw; and the world and its business, in which he had to live and move, often hovered before him like a perplexed and spectral vision. Withal it should be remembered, that, though never delivered from Self, he was not cruel or unjust, nor incapable of generous actions and the deepest attachment. His harshness was often misinterpreted; for heat of temper deformed the movements of kindness; mockery also was the dialect in which he spoke and even thought, and often, under a calm or bitter smile, he could veil the wounds of a bleeding heart. A good or a wise man we must not call him: but to others his presence was beneficent, his injuries were to himself; and among the

ordinary population of this world, to note him with the mark of reprobation were ungrateful and unjust.

His genius formed the most important element of his character, and of course participated in its faults. There are the materials of a glorious poet, but no poet has been fashioned out of them. His mind was not cultivated or brought under his own dominion; we admire the rich ingredients of it, and regret that they were never purified, and fused into a whole. His life was disjointed: he had to labour for his bread, and he followed three different arts; what wonder that in none of them he should attain perfection? Accordingly, except perhaps as a musician, the critics of his country deny him the name of an Artist: as a poet, he aimed but at popularity, and has attained little more. His intellect is seldom strong, and that only in glimpses; his abundant humour is too often false and local; his rich and gorgeous fancy is continually distorted into crotchets and caprices. In fact, he elaborated nothing; above all, not himself. His knowledge, except in the sphere of Art, is not extensive; for an author, he had read but little; criticisms, even of his own works, he never looked into; and except Richter, whom he saw only once, he seems never to have met with any individual whose conversation could instruct or direct him. Human nature he had studied only as a caricature-painter: men, it is said, in fact interested him chiefly as mimetic objects; their common doings and destiny were without beauty for him, and he observed and copied them only in their extravagances and ludicrous distortions. His works were written with incredible speed, and they bear many marks of haste: it is seldom that any piece is perfected, that its brilliant and often genuine elements are blended in harmonious union. On the largest of his completed Novels, the *Elixiere des Teufels*, he himself set no value; and the *Kater Murr*, which he meant for a higher object, he did not live to finish, nor is it thought he could have finished it. His smaller pieces were mostly written for transitory publications, and too often with only a transitory excellence. We do not read them without interest, without high amusement; but the second reading pleases worse than the first: for there is too little meaning in that bright extravagance; it is but the hurried copy of the phantasms which forever masqueraded through the author's mind; it less resembles the creation of a poet, than the dream of an opium-eater.

With these faults a rigorous criticism may charge Hoffmann; and this the more strictly, the greater his talent, the more undoubted his capability and obligation to avoid them. At the same time, to reject his claim, as has been done, to what the poets call their immortality, seems hard measure. If Callot and Teniers, his models, still figure in picture-galleries; if Rabelais continues, after centuries, to be read, and even the *Caliph Vathek*, after decades, still finds admirers, the products of a mind so brilliant, wild and singular as that of Hoffmann may long hover in the remembrance of the world; as objects of curiosity, of censure, and, on the whole, compared with absolute Nonentity, of enter-

tainment and partial approval. For the present at least, as a child of his time and his country, he is not to be overlooked in any survey of German Literature, and least of all by the foreign student of it.

Among Hoffmann's shorter performances, I find *Meister Martin* noted by his critics as the most perfect: it is a story of ancient Nürnberg, and worked up in a style which even reminds us of the Author of Waverley. Nevertheless, I have selected this *Goldne Topf*,[10] as likelier to interest the English reader: it has more of the faults, but also more of the excellences peculiar to its author, and exhibits a much truer picture of his individuality. To recommend it, criticisms would be unavailing: there is no deep art involved in its composition; to minds alive to the graces of Fancy, and disposed to pardon even its aberrations when splendid and kindly, this *Mährchen* will speak its whole meaning for itself; and to others it has little or nothing to say. The most tolerant will see in it much to pardon; but even under its present disadvantages they may perhaps recognise in it the erratic footsteps of a poet, and lament with me that his course has ended so far short of the goal.

JEAN PAUL FRIEDRICH RICHTER.

Jean Paul Friedrich Richter, one of the chosen men of Germany and of the World, whom I hoped, in my vanity, perhaps to gratify by this introduction of him to a people whom he knew and valued, has been called from his earthly sojourn since the commencement of my little task, and no voice, either of love or censure, shall any more reach his ear.

The circle of his existence is thus complete: his works and himself have assumed their final shape and combination, and lie ready for a judgment, which, when it is just, must now be unalterable. To satisfy a natural and rational curiosity respecting such a character, materials are not wanting; but to us in the mean time they are inaccessible. I have inquired in his own country, but without effect; having learned only that two *Biographies* of Richter are in the press, but that nothing on the subject has hitherto been published. For the present, therefore, I must content myself with such meagre and transitory hints as were in circulation in his lifetime, and compress into a few sentences a history which might be written in volumes.

Richter was born at Wunsiedel in Bayreuth, on the 21st of March 1763. His father was clergyman of the place, and afterwards of Schwarzbach on the Saale. The young man also was destined for the clerical profession; with a view to which, having finished his school-studies in the Hof Gymnasium, he in 1780 proceeded to the University of Leipzig, with the highest testimonials from his former masters. Theology as a profession, however, he could not relish; poetry, philosophy and general literature were his chief pursuits while at Leipzig; from which,

[10] *Golden Pot*, our only Translation from Hoffmann.

apparently after no long stay, he returned to Schwarzbach to his parents, uncertain what he should betake him to. In a little while, he attempted authorship; publishing various short miscellaneous pieces, distinguished by intellectual vigour, copious fancy, the wildest yet truest humour, the whole concocted in a style entirely his own, which, if it betrayed the writer's inexperience, could not hide the existence in him of a highly-gifted, strong and extraordinary mind. The reception of his first performances, or the inward felicity of writing, encouraged him to proceed: in the midst of an unsettled and changeful life, his pen was never idle, its productions never otherwise than new, fantastic and powerful: he lived successively in Hof, in Weimar, Berlin, Meiningen, Coburg, 'raying forth, wherever he might be stationed, the wild light of his genius over all Germany.' At last he settled in Bayreuth, having here, in testimony of his literary merit, been honoured with the title of Legations-Rath, and presented with a pension from his native Prince. In Bayreuth his chief works were written; he had married, and been blessed with two children; his intellectual labours had gained him esteem and love from all ranks of his countrymen, and chiefly from those whose suffrage was of most value; a frank and original, yet modest, good and kind deportment seems to have transferred these sentiments to his private circle: with a heart at once of the most earnest and most sportful cast; affectionate, and encompassed with the objects of his affection; diligent in the highest of all earthly tasks, the acquisition and the diffusion of Truth; and witnessing from his sequestered home the working of his own mind on thousands of fellow-minds, Richter seemed happy and at peace; and his distant reader loved to fancy him as in his calm privacy enjoying the fruit of past toils, or amid the highest and mildest meditations, looking forward to long honourable years of future toil. For his thoughts were manifold; thoughts of a moralist and a sage, no less than of a poet and a wit. The last work of his I saw advertised was a little volume entitled *On the Evergreen of our Feelings;* and in November (1825), news came that Richter was dead; and a heart which we had figured as one of the truest, deepest and gentlest that ever lived in this world, was to beat no more.

Of Richter's private character I have learned little; but that little was all favourable, and accordant with the indications in his works. Of his public and intellectual character much might be said and thought; for the secret of it is by no means floating on the surface, and it will reward some study. The most cursory inspection, even an external one, will satisfy us that he neither was, nor wished to be considered as, a man who wrote or thought in the track of other men, to whom common practices of law, and whose excellences and defects the common formulas of criticism will easily represent. The very titles of his works are startling. One of his earliest performances is named *Selection from the Papers of the Devil;* another is *Biographical Recreations under the Cranium of a Giantess.* His novels are almost uniformly introduced by some fantastic narrative accounting for his publication and obtainment of the

story. *Hesperus*, his chief novel, bears the secondary title of *Dog-post-days*, and the chapters are named *Dog-posts*, as having been conveyed to him in a letter-bag, round the neck of a little nimble Shock, from some unknown Island in the South Sea.

The first aspect of these peculiarities cannot prepossess us in his favour; we are too forcibly reminded of theatrical clap-traps and literary quackery; nor on opening one of the works themselves is the case much mended. Piercing gleams of thought do not escape us; singular truths conveyed in a form as singular; grotesque and often truly ludicrous delineations; pathetic, magnificent, far-sounding passages; effusions full of wit, knowledge and imagination, but difficult to bring under any rubric whatever; all the elements, in short, of a glorious intellect, but dashed together in such wild arrangement, that their order seems the very ideal of confusion. The style and structure of the book appear alike incomprehensible. The narrative is every now and then suspended to make way for some "Extra-leaf," some wild digression upon any subject but the one in hand; the language groans with indescribable metaphors and allusions to all things human and divine; flowing onward, not like a river, but like an inundation; circling in complex eddies, chafing and gurgling now this way, now that, till the proper current sinks out of view amid the boundless uproar. We close the work with a mingled feeling of astonishment, oppression and perplexity; and Richter stands before us in brilliant cloudy vagueness, a giant mass of intellect, but without form, beauty or intelligible purpose.

To readers who believe that intrinsic is inseparable from superficial excellence, and that nothing can be good or beautiful which is not to be seen through in a moment, Richter can occasion little difficulty. They admit him to be a man of vast natural endowments, but he is utterly uncultivated, and without command of them; full of monstrous affectation, the very high-priest of bad taste: knows not the art of writing, scarcely that there is such an art; an insane visionary floating forever among baseless dreams, which hide the firm Earth from his view; an intellectual Polyphemus; in short, a *monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens*, (carefully adding) *cui lumen ademptum;* and they close their verdict reflectively, with his own praiseworthy maxim: "Providence has given to the English the empire of the sea, to the French that of the land, to the Germans that of—the air."

In this way the matter is adjusted; briefly, comfortably and wrong. The casket was difficult to open; did we know by its very shape that there was nothing in it, that so we should cast it into the sea? Affectation is often singularity, but singularity is not always affectation. If the nature and condition of a man be really and truly, not conceitedly and untruly, singular, so also will his manner be, so also ought it to be. Affectation is the product of Falsehood, a heavy sin, and the parent of numerous heavy sins; let it be severely punished, but not too lightly imputed. Scarcely any mortal is absolutely free from it, neither most probably is Richter; but it is in minds of another substance than his

that it grows to be the ruling product. Moreover, he is actually not a visionary, but, with all his visions, will be found to see the firm Earth in its whole figures and relations much more clearly than thousands of such critics, who too probably can see nothing else. Far from being untrained or uncultivated, it will surprise these persons to discover that few men have studied the art of writing, and many other arts besides, more carefully than he ; that his *Vorschule der Æsthetik* (Introduction to Æsthetics) abounds with deep and sound maxims of criticism ; in the course of which, many complex works, his own among others, are rigidly and justly tried, and even the graces and minutest qualities of style are by no means overlooked or unwisely handled.

Withal, there is something in Richter that incites us to a second, to a third perusal. His works are hard to understand, but they always have a meaning, and often a true and deep one. In our closer, more comprehensive glance, their truth steps forth with new distinctness ; their error dissipates and recedes, passes into venality, often even into beauty ; and at last the thick haze which encircled the form of the writer melts away, and he stands revealed to us in his own steadfast features, a colossal spirit, a lofty and original thinker, a genuine poet, a high-minded, true and most amiable man.

I have called him a colossal spirit, for this impression continues with us : to the last we figure him as something gigantic ; for all the elements of his structure are vast, and combined together in living and life-giving, rather than in beautiful or symmetrical order. His Intellect is keen, impetuous, far-grasping, fit to rend in pieces the stubbornest materials, and extort from them their most hidden and refractory truth. In his Humour he sports with the highest and the lowest, he can play at bowls with the sun and moon. His Imagination opens for us the Land of Dreams ; we sail with him through the boundless abyss, and the secrets of Space, and Time, and Life, and Annihilation hover round us in dim cloudy forms, and darkness and immensity and dread encompass and overshadow us. Nay in handling the smallest matter, he works it with the tools of a giant. A common truth is wrenched from its old combinations, and presented us in new, impassable, abyssmal contrast with its opposite error. A trifle, some slender character, some weakling humorist, some jest, or quip, or spiritual toy, is shaped into most quaint, yet often truly living form ; but shaped somehow as with the hammer of Vulcan, with three strokes that might have helped to forge an Ægis. The treasures of his mind are of a similar description with the mind itself ; his knowledge is gathered from all the kingdoms of Art and Science and Nature, and lies round him in huge unwieldy heaps. His very language is Titanian ; deep, strong, tumultuous, shining with a thousand hues, fused from a thousand elements, and winding in labyrinthic mazes.

Among Richter's gifts, perhaps the first that strikes us as truly great is his Imagination ; for he loves to dwell in the loftiest and most solemn provinces of thought ; his works abound with mysterious allegories,

visions and typical adumbrations; his Dreams, in particular, have a gloomy vastness, broken here and there by wild far-darting splendour, and shadowy forms of meaning rise dimly from the bosom of the void Infinite. Yet, if I mistake not, Humour is his ruling quality, the quality which lives most deeply in his inward nature, and most strongly influences his manner of being. In this rare gift,—for none is rarer than true humour,—he stands unrivalled in his own country; and among late writers, in every other. To describe humour is difficult at all times, and would perhaps be still more difficult in Richter's case. Like all his other qualities, it is vast, rude, irregular; often perhaps overstrained and extravagant; yet fundamentally it is genuine humour, the humour of Cervantes and Sterne, the product not of Contempt but of Love, not of superficial distortion of natural forms, but of deep though playful sympathy with all forms of Nature. It springs not less from the heart than from the head; its result is not laughter, but something far kindlier and better; as it were, the balm which a generous spirit pours over the wounds of life, and which none but a generous spirit can give forth. Such humour is compatible with tenderest and sublimest feelings, or rather, it is incompatible with the want of them. In Richter, accordingly, we find a true sensibility; a softness, sometimes a simple humble pathos, which works its way into every heart. Some slight incident is carelessly thrown before us: we smile at it perhaps, but with a smile more sad than tears; and the unpretending passage in its meagre brevity sinks deeper into the soul than sentimental volumes.

It is on the strength of this and its accompanying endowments that his main success as an artist depends. His favourite characters have alw ys a dash of the ridiculous in their circumstances or their composition, perhaps in both: they are often men of no account; vain, poor, ignorant, feeble; and we scarcely know how it is that we love them; for the author all along has been laughing no less heartily than we at their ineptitudes; yet so it is, his Fibel, his Fixlein, his Siebenkäs, even his Schmelzle, insinuate themselves into our affections; and their ultimate place is closer to our hearts than that of many more splendid heroes. This is the test of true humour; no wit, no sarcasm, no knowledge will suffice; not talent but genius will accomplish the result. It is in studying these characters that we first convince ourselves of Richter's claim to the title of a poet, of a true creator. For with all his wild vagueness, this highest intellectual honour cannot be refused him. The figures and scenes which he lays before us, distorted, entangled, indescribable as they seem, have a true poetic existence; for we not only *hear* of them, but we *see* them, afar off, by the wondrous light, which none but the Poet, in the strictest meaning of that word, can shed over them.

So long as humour will avail him, his management even of higher and stronger characters may still be pronounced successful: but whenever humour ceases to be applicable, his success is more or less imperfect. In the treatment of heroes proper he is seldom completely happy. They shoot into rugged exaggeration in his hands, their sensibility be-

comes too copious and tearful, their magnanimity too fierce, abrupt and thoroughgoing. In some few instances they verge towards absolute failure: compared with their less ambitious brethren, they are almost of a vulgar cast; with all their brilliancy and vigour, too like that positive, determinate, choleric, volcanic class of personages whom we meet with so frequently in novels; they call themselves Men, and do their utmost to prove the assertion, but they cannot make us believe it; for after all their vapouring and storming, we see well enough that they are but Engines, with no more life than the Freethinkers' model in *Martinus Scriblerus*, the Nuremberg Man, who operated by a combination of pipes and levers, and though he could breathe and digest perfectly, and even reason as well as most country parsons, was made of wood and leather. In the general conduct of such histories and delineations, Richter seldom appears to advantage: the incidents are often startling and extravagant; the whole structure of the story has a rugged, broken, huge, artificial aspect, and will not assume the air of truth. Yet its chasms are strangely filled up with the costliest materials; a world, a universe of wit and knowledge and fancy and imagination has sent its fairest products to adorn the edifice; the rude and rent cyclopean walls are resplendent with jewels and beaten gold; rich stately foliage screens it, the balmiest odours encircle it; we stand astonished if not captivated, delighted if not charmed, by the artist and his art.

By a critic of his own country Richter has been named a Western Oriental, an epithet which Goethe himself is at the pains to reproduce and illustrate in his *West-östlichter Divan*. The mildness, the warm all-comprehending love attributed to Oriental poets may in fact be discovered in Richter; not less their fantastic exaggeration, their brilliant extravagance; above all, their overflowing abundance, their lyrical diffuseness, as if writing for readers who were altogether passive, to whom no sentiment could be intelligible unless it were expounded and dissected, and presented under all its thousand aspects. In this last point Richter is too much an Oriental: his passionate outpourings would often be more effective were they far briefer. Withal, however, he is a Western Oriental: he lives in the midst of cultivated Europe in the nineteenth century; he has looked with a patient and piercing eye on its motley aspect; and it is this Europe, it is the changes of its many-coloured life, that are held up to us in his works. His subject is Life; his chosen study has been Man. Few have known the world better, or taken at once a clearer and a kindlier view of its concerns. For Richter's mind is at peace with itself: a mild, humane, beneficent spirit breathes through his works. His very contempt, of which he is by no means incapable or sparing, is placid and tolerant; his affection is warm, tender, comprehensive, not dwelling among the high places of the world, not blind to its objects when found among the poor and lowly. Nature in all her scenes and manifestations he loves with a deep, almost passionate love; from the solemn phases of the starry heaven to the simple floweret of the meadow, his eye and his heart are open for her charms and her

mystic meanings. From early years, he tells us, he may be said to have almost lived under the open sky: here he could recreate himself, here he studied, here he often wrote. It is not with the feeling of a mere painter and view-hunter that he looks on Nature: but he dwells amid her beauties and solemnities as in the mansion of a Mother; he finds peace in her majestic peace; he worships, in this boundless Temple, the great original of Peace, to whom the Earth and the fulness thereof belongs. For Richter does not hide from us that he looks to the Maker of the Universe as to his Father; that in his belief of man's Immortality lies the sanctuary of his spirit, the solace of all suffering, the solution of all that is mysterious in human destiny. The wild freedom with which he treats the dogmas of religion must not mislead us to suppose that he himself is irreligious or unbelieving. It is Religion, it is Belief, in whatever dogmas expressed, or whether expressed in any, that has reconciled for him the contradictions of existence, that has overspread his path with light, and chastened the fiery elements of his spirit by mingling with them Mercy and Humility. To many of my readers it may be surprising, that in this respect Richter is almost solitary among the great minds of his country. These men too, with few exceptions, seem to have arrived at spiritual peace, at full harmonious development of being; but their path to it has been different. In Richter alone, among the great (and even sometimes truly moral) writers of his day,[11] do we find the Immortality of the Soul expressly insisted on, nay so much as incidentally alluded to. This is a fact well meriting investigation and reflection; but here is not the place for treating it.

Of Richter's Works I have left myself no room for speaking individually; nor, except with large details, could the criticism of them be attempted with any profit. His Novels, published in what order I have not accurately learned, are the *Unsichtbare Loge* (Invisible Lodge); *Flegeljahre* (Wild Oats); *Leben Fibels, Verfassers der Beinrodischen Fibel* (Life of Fibel; or to translate the spirit of it: Life of Primer, Author of the Christ-church Primer); *Leben des Quintus Fixlein*, and *Schmelzle's Reise*, here presented to the English reader: *Katzenberger's Badereise*, and the *Jubelsenior;* with two of much larger and more ambitious structure, *Hesperus* and *Titan*, each of which I have in its turn seen rated as his masterpiece: the former only is known to me. His work on Criticism has been mentioned already: he has also written on Education, a volume named *Levana;* the *Campanerthal* (Campanian Vale) I understand to turn upon the Immortality of the Soul. His miscellaneous and fugitive writings were long to enumerate. Essays, fantasies, apologues,

[11] The two venerable Jacobis belong, in character, if scarcely in date, to an older school; so also does Herder, from whom Richter learned much, both morally and intellectually, and whom he seems to have loved and reverenced beyond any other. Wieland is intelligible enough; a sceptic in the style of Bolingbroke and Shaftesbury, what we call a French or Scotch sceptic, a rather shallow species. Lessing also is a sceptic, but of a much nobler sort; a doubter who deserved to believe.

dreams, have appeared in various periodicals: the best of these performances, collected and revised by himself, were published some years ago, under the title of *Herbst-Blumine* (Autumnal Flora). There is also a *Chrestomathie* (what we should call Beauties) of Richter, in four volumes.

To characterise these works would be difficult after the fullest inspection: to describe them to English readers would be next to impossible. Whether poetical, philosophical, didactic, or fantastic, they seem all to be emblems, more or less complete, of the singular mind where they originated. As a whole, the first perusal of them, more particularly to a foreigner, is almost infallibly offensive; and neither their meaning, nor their no-meaning, is to be discerned without long and sedulous study. They are a tropical wilderness, full of endless tortuosities; but with the fairest flowers, and the coolest fountains; now overarching us with high umbrageous gloom, now opening in long gorgeous vistas. We wander through them enjoying their wild grandeur; and by degrees our half-contemptuous wonder at the Author passes into reverence and love. His face was long hid from us: but we see him at length in the firm shape of spiritual manhood; a vast and most singular nature, but vindicating his singular nature by the force, the beauty and benignity which pervade it. In fine, we joyfully accept him for what he is, and was meant to be. The graces, the polish, the sprightly elegances which belong to men of lighter make, we cannot look for or demand from him. His movement is essentially slow and cumbrous, for he advances not with one faculty, but with a whole mind; with intellect, and pathos, and wit, and humour, and imagination, moving onward like a mighty host, motley, ponderous, irregular and irresistible. He is not airy, sparkling and precise, but deep, billowy and vast. The melody of his nature is not expressed in common note-marks, or written down by the critical gamut; for it is wild and manifold; its voice is like the voice of cataracts and the sounding of primeval forests. To feeble ears it is discord, but to ears that understand it deep majestic music.

In his own country, we are told,[12] 'Richter has been in fashion, then 'out of fashion, then in it again; till at last he has been raised far above 'all fashion,' which indeed is his proper place. What his fate will be in England is now to be decided. Could much-respected counsels from admirers of Richter have availed with me, he had not at present been put upon his trial. Predictions are unanimous that here he will be condemned or even neglected. Of my countrymen, in this small instance,

[12] Franz Horn's *Poesie und Beredsamkeit der Deutschen* (Poetry and Eloquence of the Germans, from Luther's time to the present); a work which I am bound to recommend to all students of German literature, as a valuable guide and indicator. Bating a certain not altogether erroneous sectarianism in regard to religion, and a certain janty priggishness of style, nay it must be owned, a corresponding priggishness of character, they will find in Horn a lively, fair, well-read and on the whole interesting and instructive critic. The work is in three volumes; to which a prior publication, entitled *Umrisse* (Outlines), forms a fourth; bringing down the History, or rather Sketch, to the borders of the year 1819.

I have ventured to think otherwise. To those, it is true, 'the space of whose Heaven does not extend more than three ells,' and who understand and perceive that with these three ells the Canopy of the Universe terminates, Richter will justly enough appear a monster, from without the verge of warm three-ell Creation; and their duty, with regard to him, will limit itself to chasing him forth of the habitable World, back again into his native Chaos. If we judge of works of art, as the French do of language, with a *Cela ne se dit pas*, Richter will not escape his doom; for it is too true that he respects not the majesty of Use and Wont, and has said and thought much which is by no means usually said and thought. In England, however, such principles of literary jurisprudence are rarer. To many, I may hope, even this dim glimpse of a spirit like Richter's will be gratifying; and if it can hardly be expected that their first judgment of him will be favourable, curiosity may be awakened, and a second and a truer judgment, on ampler grounds and maturer reflection, may follow. His larger works must ultimately become known to us; they deserve it better than thousands which have had that honour.

Of the two Works here offered to the reader little special explanation is required. *Schmelzle's Journey* I have not found noticed by any of his German critics; and must give it on my own responsibility, as one of the most finished, as it is at least one of the simplest, among his smaller humorous performances. *The Life of Fixlein*, no stepchild in its own country, seems nevertheless a much more immature, as it is a much earlier composition. I select it not without reluctance; rather from necessity than preference. Its faults, I am too sure, will strike us much sooner than its beauties; and even by the friendliest and most patient critic it must be admitted that among the latter, many of our Author's highest qualities are by no means exhibited in full concentration, nay that some of them are wanting altogether, or at best, indicated rather than evinced. Let the reader accept it with such allowances; not as Richter's best novel, which it is far from being, but simply as his shortest complete one; not as a full impress of him, but as a faint outline, intended rather to excite curiosity than to satisfy it. On the whole, Richter's is a mind peculiarly difficult to represent by specimen; for its elements are complex and various, and it is not more by quality than by quantity that it impresses us.

Both Works I have endeavoured to present in their full dimensions, with all their appurtenances, strange as some of these may appear. If the language seem rugged, heterogeneous, perplexed, the blame is not wholly mine. Richter's style may be pronounced the most untranslateable, not in German only, but in any other modern literature.[13] Let the

[13] The following long title of a little German Book I may quote by way of premunition: "K. REINHOLD'S *Lexicon for* JEAN PAUL'S *Works, or Explanation of all the foreign Words and unusual Modes of Speech which occur in his Writings; with short Notices of the historical Persons and Facts therein alluded to; and plain German Versions of the most difficult*

English reader fancy a Burton writing, not an *Anatomy of Melancholy*, but a foreign romance, through the scriptory organs of a Jeremy Bentham! Richter exhausts all the powers of his own most ductile language: what in him was overstrained and rude would naturally become not less but more so in the hands of his translator.

For this, and many other offences of my Author, apologies might be attempted; but much as I wish for a favourable sentence, it is not meet that Richter, in the Literary Judgment-hall, should appear as a culprit; or solicit suffrages, which, if he cannot claim them, are unavailing. With the hundred real, and the ten thousand seeming weaknesses of his cause, a fair trial is a thing he will court rather than dread.

GOETHE.

THE distinguished and peculiar man who occupies the last volume in our Collection has lightened the task of his biographers and critics, by a work of great interest, which he has himself given to the world, and of which some more or less accurate resemblance is also before the English reader. In his *Dichtung und Wahrheit* Goethe has accomplished the difficult problem of autobiography with what seems a singular success: here, in the kindest and coolest spirit, he conducts us through the scenes of his past existence; unfolds with graphic clearness and light gay dignity whatever influenced the formation of his character and mode of thought; depicting all with the knowledge of a chief actor, and the calm impartial penetration of a spectator; speaking of himself as many would wish, but few are able, to speak of themselves: In the temper of a third party, and not sooner or not farther than others are desirous and entitled to hear that subject treated. If the old remark is true, that a faithful secret-history of the humblest human being would be attractive and instructive to the highest, this picture of the spiritual and moral growth of a Goethe may well be considered as deserving no common attention. I am sorry to understand that the English version of the work is not from the German, but from the French: judging by the size of the book, the business of curtailment in this *Life of Goethe* must have been proceeded in with a liberal and fearless hand; it seems also that there are additions, which probably are still more offensive. To this copy of the portrait, defaced and distorted as it cannot fail to be, I must not refer the reader: yet all that can be attempted here is a few slight sketches, more in the way of commentary than of narrative.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was born at Frankfort-on-Mayn, on the 28th of August 1749. The station and circumstances of his family

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Passages in the Context. A necessary Assistant for all who would read those Works with profit. First Volume, containing LEVANA. Leipzig, 1808." Unhappily, with this First Volume K. Reinhold seems to have stopped short. More than once, in the following pages, have I longed for his help; and been forced at last to rest satisfied with *a* meaning, and too imperfect a conviction that it was the right one.

were of a favourable sort: his father bore the title of Imperial Councillor, and though personally unconnected with active affairs, stood in close relation with the influential and cultivated classes of the community. Both parents appear likewise to have been of a determinate and genuine form of mind, possessing many virtues, and no inconsiderable share of intellectual gifts and attainments. In the height of his fame it was observed of Goethe, that his true-hearted, idiomatic and expressive style of speech recalled his mother to memory; who, while nursing her fair boy on her knee, had little dreamed that in him her own good and kindly character was to be transfigured to such beauty and enlargement, and transmitted in glorious emblems to distant countries and succeeding ages. The father, of course, was fashioned in a more rugged mould, and seems also to have been originally of sterner stuff; a rigorous, abrupt, positive and thoroughgoing man; somewhat of a humorist, for he actually built his house from the top downwards; testy and indomitable, but not ill-natured or ungenerous; clear in his perceptions, as he was resolute in his actions; and withal of an honest and manly heart. Both these modes of character appear to have united in the son; the liveliest susceptibility of all sorts was superadded to them; and the scene he lived in acted on him with strong and complicated influences. These earliest images of his memory he has set before us with the most graceful simplicity in the work above referred to: the aspects of life in Gothic Frankfort, with its old German minds and old German manners, are brought home to our eyes; we walk among rich old-fashioned wondrous objects, and converse with originals as wondrous and old-fashioned as their abode.

Goethe was destined, as his Father had been, for the profession of law; and in due time he went successively to Leipzig and Strasburg, to prepare for, and to undertake, the study of it. But his quick, impassioned and discursive mind, impressed by the most varied impulses, was continually diverging into many provinces remote enough from this his appointed occupation; for which, as was naturally to be expected, he had never shown any preference; though, from time to time, he had not failed to prosecute, with fits of resolute diligence, the tasks prescribed by it. In 1771, he obtained his degree: but if the form of his outward life might now seem clear and determined, his inward world was still in a state of uproar and disorder. The ambition of wealth and official celebrity would not seize him with due force: a thousand vague purposes, and vehement wishes, and brightest and blackest forecastings were conflicting within him; for a strong spirit was here struggling to body itself forth from the most discordant elements; and what was at last to rise as a fair universe of thought still rolled as a dim and wasteful chaos.

By degrees, however, after not a little suffering in many hard contests with himself and his circumstances, he began to emerge from these troubles: light dawned on his course; and his true destination, a life of literature, became more and more plain to him. His first efforts were crowned with a success well calculated to confirm him in such purposes.

Götz von Berlichingen, an historical drama of the Feudal Ages, appeared in 1773; by the originality both of its subject and its execution, attracting the public eye to the young author: and next year his *Sorrows of Werter* rose like a literary meteor on the world; and carried his name on its blazing wings, not only over Germany, but into the remotest corners of Europe. The chief incident of this work had been suggested by a tragical catastrophe, which had occurred in his neighbourhood, during a residence at Wetzlar: the emotions and delineations which give life to it; the vague impassioned longing, the moody melancholy, the wayward love and indignation, the soft feeling and the stern philosophy, which characterise the hero, he had drawn from his own past or actual experience.

The works just mentioned, though noble specimens of youthful talent, are still not so much distinguished by their intrinsic merits as by their splendid fortune. It would be difficult to name two books which have exercised a deeper influence on the subsequent literature of Europe than these two performances of a young author; his first-fruits, the produce of his twenty-fourth year. *Werter* appeared to seize the hearts of men in all quarters of the world, and to utter for them the word which they had long been waiting to hear. As usually happens, too, this same word once uttered was soon abundantly repeated; spoken in all dialects, and chanted through all the notes of the gamut, till at length the sound of it had grown a weariness rather than a pleasure. Sceptical sentimentality, view-hunting, love, friendship, suicide and desperation, became the staple of literary ware; and though the epidemic, after a long course of years, subsided in Germany, it reappeared with various modifications in other countries; and everywhere abundant traces of its good and bad effects are still to be discerned. The fortune of *Berlichingen with the Iron Hand*, though less sudden, was by no means less exalted. In his own country, *Götz*, though he now stands solitary and childless, became the parent of an innumerable progeny of chivalry plays, feudal delineations, and poetico-antiquarian performances; which, though long ago deceased, made noise enough in their day and generation: and with ourselves his influence has been perhaps still more remarkable. Sir Walter Scott's first literary enterprise was a translation of *Götz von Berlichingen:* and if genius could be communicated like instruction, we might call this work of Goethe's the prime cause of *Marmion* and the *Lady of the Lake*, with all that has followed from the same creative hand. Truly, a grain of seed that has lighted in the right soil! For if not firmer and fairer, it has grown to be taller and broader than any other tree; and all the nations of the Earth are still yearly gathering of its fruit.

But, overlooking these spiritual genealogies, which bring little certainty and little profit, it may be sufficient to observe of *Berlichingen* and *Werter*, that they stand prominent among the causes, or, at the very least, among the signals, of a great change in modern Literature. The former directed men's attention with a new force to the picturesque effects of the Past; and the latter, for the first time, attempted the more accurate delineation of a class of feelings, deeply important to mo-

dern minds; but for which our elder poetry offered no exponent, and perhaps could offer none, because they are feelings that arise from passion incapable of being converted into action, and belong chiefly to an age as indolent, cultivated and unbelieving as our own. This, notwithstanding the dash of falsehood which may exist in *Werter* itself, and the boundless delirium of extravagance which it called forth in others, is a high praise which cannot justly be denied it. The English reader ought also to understand that our current version of *Werter* is mutilated and inaccurate: it comes to us through the all-subduing medium of the French; shorn of its caustic strength; with its melancholy rendered maudlin; its hero reduced from the stately gloom of a broken-hearted poet to the tearful wrangling of a dyspeptic tailor.

One of the very first to perceive the faults of these works, and the ridiculous extravagance of their imitators, was Goethe himself. In this unlooked-for and unexampled popularity, he was far from feeling that he had attained his object: this first outpouring of his soul had calmed its agitations, not exhausted or even indicated its strength; and he now began to see afar off a much higher region, as well as glimpses of the track by which it might be reached. To cultivate his own spirit, not only as an author, but as a man; to obtain dominion over it, and wield its resources as instruments in the service of what seemed Good and Beautiful, had been his object more or less distinctly from the first, as it is that of all true men in their several spheres. According to his own deep maxim, that 'Doubt of any sort can only be removed by Action,' this object had now become more clear to him; and he may be said to have pursued it to the present hour, with a comprehensiveness and unwearied perseverance, rarely if ever exemplified in the history of such a mind.

His external relations had already ceased to obstruct him in this pursuit, and they now became more favourable than ever. In 1776, the Heir Apparent of Weimar was passing through Frankfort; on which occasion, by the intervention of some friends, he waited upon Goethe. The visit must have been mutually agreeable; for a short time afterwards, the young author was invited to Court; apparently, to contribute his assistance in various literary institutions and arrangements, then proceeding or contemplated; and in pursuance of this honourable call, he accordingly settled at Weimar, with the title of *Legationsrath*, and the actual dignity of a place in the *Collegium*, or Council. The connexion, begun under such favourable auspices, and ever since continued unimpaired, has been productive of important consequences, not only to Weimar, but to all Germany. The noble purpose undertaken by the Duchess Amelia was zealously forwarded by the young Duke on his accession; under whose influence, supported and directed by his new Councillor, this inconsiderable state has gained for itself a fairer distinction than any of its larger, richer, or more warlike rivals. By degrees, whatever was brightest in the genius of Germany had been gathered to this little Court: a classical theatre was under the superintendence of

Goethe and Schiller; here Wieland taught and sung; in the pulpit was Herder: and possessing such a four, the small town of Weimar, some twenty years ago, might challenge the proudest capital of the world to match it in intellectual wealth. Occupied so profitably to his country, and honourably to himself, Goethe continued rising in estimation with his Prince: by degrees, a political was added to his literary influence; in 1779 he became Privy Councillor; President in 1782; and, at length, after his return from Italy, where he had spent two years in various studies and observation, he was appointed Minister; a post which he only a few years ago resigned, on his final retirement from public affairs. In this, his second country, he still resides. The German biographies are careful to inform us that by the Duke of Weimar he was ennobled; and decorated by Alexander and Napoleon, and various other kings and kaisers, with their several insignia of honour.

A much purer and more imperishable series of honours he has earned for himself, by the peaceful efforts of his own genius. His active duties were, at all times, more or less intimately connected with literature; they seem not to have obstructed the silent labours of his closet; and perhaps they rather forwarded the great business of his life, a thorough universal culture of all his being. Goethe's history is a picture of the most diverse studies and acquisitions: Literature he has tried successfully in nearly every one of its departments; with Art, ancient and modern, he has familiarised himself beyond a rival; Science, also, he seems to have surveyed with no careless or feeble eye, and his contributions to several of its branches, particularly of Botany and Optics, have been thankfully received by their professors. Some of our readers may be surprised to learn, that the painted Diagram of Mountain-altitudes which ornaments their libraries, exhibiting in one view the successive elevations of the Globe, was devised by the Author of *Faust* and *The Sorrows of Werter*.

Goethe's purely literary works amount to between twenty and thirty considerable volumes. A bare enumeration of their names, without note or comment, would be perplexing rather than instructive; and for note or comment of the humblest sort our present limits are too narrow. In the province of the Drama, omitting *Egmont*, *Iphigenie*, and multitudes of lighter pieces, we must mention, as entitled to peculiar distinction, the tragedy of *Torquato Tasso* and the play of *Faust*. The first paints, in simple gracefulness, the poetic temperament at conflict with the ordinances of vulgar life; a pure and touching picture, full of wisdom, calm depth and unostentatious pathos. The second, of a still deeper character, images forth, in the superstitious tradition of *Faust*, the contest of the good principle in human nature with the bad; the struggle of Man's Soul against Ignorance, Sin and Suffering; the indirect subject of many, perhaps of all true poems; but here treated directly, with a wild mysterious impressiveness, which distinguishes this play from every other. *Faust* and also *Iphigenie* have been translated into English.

Another singular performance of Goethe's is *Reinecke Fuchs*, a poetic version of the old tale, said to be originally a Netherlands political pasquinade, and which exists in English, under the corresponding title of *Reynard the Fox*. Goethe's work is written in hexameters, in twelve books, like another *Æneid:* a wondrous affair; imbued with the truest humour, full of marvellous imitations, grotesque descriptions, and manifold moralities. If beasts could speak, we should surely expect them to express their 'general views' as they are made to do in this epos: the ass here is a philosophical masticator of thistles and gorse; Bruin thinks, and talks, and acts, like a very bear; and 'Malapertus the Fortress' is still redolent of murdered poultry. Nor is this strange mimicry the sole charm of the work; for there is method in its madness; across these marvellous delineations we discern a deeper significance. It is a parody of human life, as it were, a magic picture, with forms of the wildest mirth, which, while we gaze on them, sadden into serious and instructive, though still smiling, monitors. *Hermann und Dorothea* is also written in hexameters, and with a cheerful earnestness, which has recommended it to great favour with the Germans. You see it printed in gay miniature, with gilding and decorations; and friend testifies his kindness to friend by the present of this *Civic Epos*.

In the Romance department, Goethe has written several works, and on peculiar principles. Besides *Werter*, we have *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, and *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (The Elective Affinities); and five years ago he published the first volume of *Wilhelm Meister's Travels*, a fragment which the reader is now to have an opportunity of perusing. These performances, though bearing the common name of novel, are of very varied quality: and some of them but ill represented by so trivial a title. *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, for instance, whatever may be thought of it in other respects, has a deeper object than many a poem which has called itself epic: nor was it hastily or carelessly huddled together without study; for this novel, it would appear, lay ten years in the Author's mind and hand, one year longer than even the Horatian period. Like many of his other works, *Meister* has called forth a numerous series of imitations; but the strength of such productions lies less in the form than in the substance, which it is not so easy to copy; and accordingly, when most of these 'Art-novels' are forgotten, *Meister* alone continues rising in esteem. Except the *Wahlverwandtschaften*, all Goethe's novels are now in English.

Of his numerous short Poems it is difficult to say a well-weighed word: for they are of all sorts, gay and grave, descriptive, lyrical, didactic, idyllic, epigrammatic; and of all these species, the common name, without long expositions, would, when applied to him, excite a false idea. Goethe is nowhere more entirely original, more fascinating, more indescribable, than in his smaller poems. One quality which very generally marks them, particularly those of a later date, is their peculiar expressiveness, their fulness of meaning. A single thing is said, and a thousand things are indicated. They are spells which cleave to our

memory, and by which we summon beautiful spirits from the vasty deep of thought. Often at the first aspect they appear commonplace, or altogether destitute of significance: we look at the lines on the canvas; and they seem careless dashes, mere random strokes, representing nothing save the caprices of their author; we change our place, we shift and shift, till we find the right point of view; and all at once a fair figure starts into being, encircled with graces and light charms, and by its witcheries attracting heart and mind. In his songs he recalls to us those of Shakspeare: they are not speeches, but musical tones; the sentiment is not stated in logical sequence, but poured forth in fitful and fantastic suggestions: they are the wild woodnotes of the nightingale; they are to be sung, not said.

A large portion of Goethe's writings still remains to be classed under the head of Miscellanies. We have sketches of Travels; dissertations, direct or allegorical, on Art; autobiography, continuous or in fragments; fantasies, dialogues, or other light essays, on Taste, Manners, and Morals; there is even a short treatise on the geography of the Children of Israel's journey into Canaan! Nor has he disdained the humble offices of a translator and editor. The *Life of Benvenuto Cellini*, which lately appeared in English, he long ago translated, with notes. Voltaire's *Mahomet* had a similar honour from him; also Diderot's *Neveu de Rameau*, the original of which was published only very lately, many years after the German version. His editorial functions, I believe, he has not yet laid aside; for two periodicals, the *Morphologie* and the *Kunst und Alterthum* (Art and Antiquities), are still occasionally continued under his direction and coöperation.

Such are some specimens of the labours, in which Goethe has spent many diligent and most honourable years. That they are too varied to be all excellent, that he would have better cared for his fame, had he limited his efforts to a narrower circle, is an obvious cavil; to which also he can reply, as he has already done for D'Alembert, that there are higher things on Earth than fame; that a universal development of our spiritual nature may actually be more precious to us than the solace of our vanity; that the true business is to *be*, not to *seem*; and that intellectual *artisanship*, however wondered at, is less desirable than intellectual *manhood*. Goethe has a right to speak on this subject: for he has tried public favour, and tried the want of it; and found that he could hold on his way through either fortune. Thirty years ago, he might be said to be without an audience even in his own country; his best works were received with chilling apathy, or objected to with the most melancholy stolidity; and many a good-natured friend might be heard lamenting that the genius of Goethe should have faded with the fire of his youth, that the author of *Werter* and *Berlichingen* should have sunk to *Meister* and *Torquato Tasso*. Goethe had outgrown his generation; his culture was too high for its apprehension. He went on unweariedly to cultivate himself still farther. These things have their day: the reign of Stupidity is boisterous and boastful; but it shall not endure forever.

A better race of critics arose; the Nicolais[14] and Mansos gave place to the Schlegels, the Tiecks, the Richters. Goethe has lived to see a truer time; his calm perseverance has met with its outward as well as its inward rewards; and what was once the solitary consciousness of his own mind, is now reflected back to him from millions of approving minds. In the evening of his glorious life, a destiny has been provided for him such as falls to the lot of few mortals. Secluded in the bosom of his family; surrounded, and still occupied, with whatever is curious in literature, science, or art, the venerable Master, in looking at the bright past, may find it yet in harmony with the present and the future: for his heart and hand are still busy in his vocation; faces that love him gladden his abode; and voices of reverence and gratitude reach him from all ends of the world. His mental faculties seem visited by no decay: the work written last year is as full of life as the work written threescore years ago: his mind is growing older, but more interesting, as well as older; it is stiller, wiser, lovelier; and the long shadows of evening are blended with the mellowest sunshine. His *Westöstlicher Divan*, a series of *Western-oriental* sketches and poems, is still as graceful and expressive as if half a century had been subtracted from its date. *Wilhelm Meister's Travels* was published in 1821; and some of our readers may peruse it with a new interest, as the singular specimen of a light and living poem by a man of seventy-two.

Of a nature so rare and complex it is difficult to form a true comprehension; difficult even to express what comprehension one has formed. In Goethe's mind, the first aspect that strikes us is its calmness, then its beauty; a deeper inspection reveals to us its vastness and unmea-

[14] Nocolai was a Bookseller in Berlin; a man of a shrewd, inquiring, substantial mind; what is called a sound practical man. He had made considerable attainments in knowledge by his own unaided efforts; and was indeed a very meritorious person, had he not committed one fundamental error: To the very last he never could persuade himself that there was anything in Heaven or Earth which had not been dreamed of in *his* philosophy. He was animated with a fierce zeal against Jesuits; in this most people thought him partly right; but when he wrote against Kant's philosophy, without comprehending it; and judged of poetry as he judged of Brunswick mum, by its *utility*, many people thought him wrong. A man of such spiritual habitudes is now by the Germans called a *Philister*, Philistine: Nicolai earned for himself the painful preëminence of being *Erz-Philister*, Arch-Philistine. Stray specimens of the Philistine nation are said to exist in our own Islands; but we have no name for them like the Germans; who indeed, by this cheek-burning, may perhaps be thought to have cleaned their country *too* well of these Uncircumcised. By way of explanation, I should add, that *Philister* in the dialect of German Universities corresponds to the *Brute*, or *Snob*, of Cambridge; designating every non-student. As applied to Nicolai and his kindred, it came into use in the period of the *Xenien* (see § *Tieck*); and in this sense it is now to be found, with all its derivatives, even in grave writings. At present, the literary Philistine seldom shows, never parades, himself in Germany; and when he does appear, he is in the last stage of emaciation.

sured strength. This man rules, and is not ruled. The stern and fiery energies of a most passionate soul lie silent in the centre of his being; a trembling sensibility has been inured to stand, without flinching or murmur, the sharpest trials. Nothing outward, nothing inward, shall agitate or control him. The brightest and most capricious fancy, the most piercing and inquisitive intellect, the wildest and deepest imagination; the highest thrills of joy, the bitterest pangs of sorrow: all these are his, he is not theirs. While he moves every heart from its steadfastness, his own is firm and still: the words that search into the inmost recesses of our nature, he pronounces with a tone of coldness and equanimity; in the deepest pathos he weeps not, or his tears are like water trickling from a rock of adamant. He is king of himself and of his world; nor does he rule it like a vulgar great man, like a Napoleon or Charles Twelfth, by the mere brute exertion of his will, grounded on no principle, or on a false one: his faculties and feelings are not fettered or prostrated under the iron sway of Passion, but led and guided in kindly union under the mild sway of Reason; as the fierce primeval elements of Nature were stilled at the coming of Light, and bound together, under its soft vesture, into a glorious and beneficent Creation.

This is the true Rest of man; no stunted unbelieving callousness, no reckless surrender to blind Force, no opiate delusion; but the harmonious adjustment of Necessity and Accident, of what is changeable and what is unchangeable in our destiny; the calm supremacy of the spirit over its circumstances; the dim aim of every human soul, the full attainment of only a chosen few. It comes not unsought to any; but the wise are wise because they think no price too high for it. Goethe's inward home has been reared by slow and laborious efforts; but it stands on no hollow or deceitful basis: for his peace is not from blindness, but from clear vision; not from uncertain hope of alteration, but from sure insight into what cannot alter. His world seems once to have been desolate and baleful as that of the darkest sceptic: but he has covered it anew with beauty and solemnity, derived from deeper sources, over which Doubt can have no sway. He has inquired fearlessly, and fearlessly searched out and denied the False; but he has not forgotten, what is equally essential and infinitely harder, to search out and admit the True. His heart is still full of warmth, though his head is clear and cold; the world for him is still full of grandeur, though he clothes it with no false colours; his fellow-creatures are still objects of reverence and love, though their basenesses are plainer to no eye than to his. To reconcile these contradictions is the task of all good men, each for himself, in his own way and manner; a task which, in our age, is encompassed with difficulties peculiar to the time; and which Goethe seems to have accomplished with a success that few can rival. A mind so in unity with itself, even though it were a poor and small one, would arrest our attention, and win some kind regard from us; but when this mind ranks among the strongest and most complicated of the species, it becomes a sight full of interest, a study full of deep instruction.

Such a mind as Goethe's is the fruit not only of a royal endowment by nature, but also of a culture proportionate to her bounty. In Goethe's original form of spirit we discern the highest gifts of manhood, without any deficiency of the lower: he has an eye and a heart equally for the sublime, the common, and the ridiculous; the elements at once of a poet, a thinker, and a wit. Of his culture we have often spoken already; and it deserves again to be held up to praise and imitation. This, as he himself unostentatiously confesses, has been the soul of all his conduct, the great enterprise of his life; and few that understand him will be apt to deny that he has prospered. As a writer, his resources have been accumulated from nearly all the provinces of human intellect and activity; and he has trained himself to use these complicated instruments with a light expertness which we might have admired in the professor of a solitary department. Freedom, and grace, and smiling earnestness are the characteristics of his works: the matter of them flows along in chaste abundance, in the softest combination; and their style is referred to by native critics as the highest specimen of the German tongue. On this latter point the vote of a stranger may well be deemed unavailing; but the charms of Goethe's style lie deeper than the mere words; for language, in the hands of a master, is the express image of thought, or rather it is the body of which thought is the soul; the former rises into being together with the latter, and the graces of the one are shadowed forth in the movements of the other. Goethe's language, even to a foreigner, is full of character and secondary meanings; polished, yet vernacular and cordial, it sounds like the dialect of wise, ancient, and true-hearted men: in poetry, brief, sharp, simple and expressive; in prose, perhaps still more pleasing; for it is at once concise and full, rich, clear, unpretending and melodious; and the sense, not presented in alternating flashes, piece after piece revealed and withdrawn, rises before us as in continuous dawning, and stands at last simultaneously complete, and bathed in the mellowest and ruddiest sunshine. It brings to mind what the prose of Hooker, Bacon, Milton, Browne, would have been, had they written under the good, without the bad influences, of that French precision, which has polished and attenuated, trimmed and impoverished, all modern languages; made our meaning clear, and too often shallow as well as clear.

But Goethe's culture as a writer is perhaps less remarkable than his culture as a man. He has learned not in head only, but also in heart; not from Art and Literature, but also by action and passion, in the rugged school of Experience. If asked what was the grand characteristic of his writings, we should not say knowledge, but wisdom. A mind that has seen, and suffered, and done, speaks to us of what it has tried and conquered. A gay delineation will give us notice of dark and toilsome experiences, of business done in the great deep of the spirit; a maxim, trivial to the careless eye, will rise with light and solution over long perplexed periods of our own history. It is thus that heart speaks to heart, that the life of one man becomes a possession to all. Here is a mind

of the most subtle and tumultuous elements; but it is governed in peaceful diligence, and its impetuous and ethereal faculties work softly together for good and noble ends. Goethe may be called a Philosopher; for he loves and has practised as a man the wisdom which, as a poet, he inculcates. Composure and cheerful seriousness seem to breathe over all his character. There is no whining over human woes: it is understood that we must simply all strive to alleviate or remove them. There is no noisy battling for opinions; but a persevering effort to make Truth lovely, and recommend her, by a thousand avenues, to the hearts of all men. Of his personal manners we can easily believe the universal report, as often given in the way of censure as of praise, that he is a man of consummate breeding and the stateliest presence: for an air of polished tolerance, of courtly, we might almost say majestic repose, and serene humanity, is visible throughout his works. In no line of them does he speak with asperity of any man; scarcely ever even of a thing. He knows the good, and loves it; he knows the bad and hateful, and rejects it; but in neither case with violence: his love is calm and active; his rejection is implied, rather than pronounced; meek and gentle, though we see that it is thorough, and never to be revoked. The noblest and the basest he not only seems to comprehend, but to personate and body forth in their most secret lineaments: hence actions and opinions appear to him as they are, with all the circumstances which extenuate or endear them to the hearts where they originated and are entertained. This also is the spirit of our Shakspeare, and perhaps of every great dramatic poet. Shakspeare is no sectarian; to all he deals with equity and mercy; because he knows all, and his heart is wide enough for all. In his mind the world is a whole; he figures it as Providence governs it; and to him it is not strange that the sun should be caused to shine on the evil and the good, and the rain to fall on the just and the unjust.

Goethe has been called the German Voltaire; but it is a name which does him wrong, and describes him ill. Except in the corresponding variety of their pursuits and knowledge, in which, perhaps, it does Voltaire wrong, the two cannot be compared. Goethe is all, or the best of all, that Voltaire was, and he is much that Voltaire did not dream of. To say nothing of his dignified and truthful character as a man, he belongs, as a thinker and a writer, to a far higher class than this *enfant gâté du monde qu'il gâta*. He is not a questioner and a despiser, but a teacher and a reverencer; not a destroyer, but a builder-up; not a wit only, but a wise man. Of him Montesquieu could not have said, with even epigrammatic truth: *Il a plus que personne l'esprit que tout le monde a.* Voltaire was the *cleverest* of all past and present men; but a great man is something more, and this he surely was not.

As poets, the two live not in the same hemisphere, not in the same world. Of Voltaire's poetry, it were blindness to deny the polished intellectual vigour, the logical symmetry, the flashes that from time to time give it the colour, if not the warmth, of fire: but it is in a far other sense than this that Goethe is a poet; in a sense of which the French literature

has never afforded any example. We may venture to say of him, that his province is high and peculiar; higher than any poet but himself, for several generations, has so far succeeded in, perhaps even has steadfastly attempted. In reading Goethe's poetry, it perpetually strikes us that we are reading the poetry of our own day and generation. No demands are made on our credulity; the light, the science, the scepticism of the age, are not hid from us. He does not deal in antiquated mythologies, or ring changes on traditionary poetic forms; there are no supernal, no infernal influences, for *Faust* is an apparent rather than a real exception: but there is the barren prose of the nineteenth century, the vulgar life which we are all leading; and it starts into strange beauty in his hands; and we pause in delighted wonder to behold the flower of Poesy blooming in that parched and rugged soil. This is the end of his *Mignons* and *Harpers*, of his *Tassos* and *Meisters*. Poetry, as he views it, exists not in time or place, but in the spirit of man; and Art, with Nature, is now to perform for the poet, what Nature alone performed of old. The divinities and demons, the witches, spectres, and fairies, are vanished from the world, never again to be recalled: but the Imagination which created these still lives, and will forever live in man's soul; and can again pour its wizard light over the Universe, and summon forth enchantments as lovely or impressive, and which its sister faculties will not contradict. To say that Goethe has accomplished all this, would be to say that his genius is greater than was ever given to any man: for if it was a high and glorious mind, or rather series of minds, that peopled the first ages with their peculiar forms of poetry, it must be a series of minds much higher and more glorious that shall so people the present. The angels and demons that can lay prostrate our hearts in the nineteenth century must be of another and more cunning fashion than those that subdued us in the ninth. To have attempted, to have begun this enterprise, may be accounted the greatest praise. That Goethe ever meditated it, in the form here set forth, we have no direct evidence: but indeed such is the end and aim of high poetry at all times and seasons; for the fiction of the poet is not falsehood, but the purest truth; and if he would lead captive our whole being, not rest satisfied with a part of it, he must address us on interests that *are*, not that *were*, ours; and in a dialect which finds a response, and not a contradiction, within our bosoms.

How Goethe has fulfilled these conditions in addressing us, an inspection of his works, but no description, can inform us. Let me advise the reader to study them, and see. If he come to the task with an opinion that poetry is an amusement, a passive recreation; that its highest object is to supply a languid mind with fantastic shows and indolent emotions, his measure of enjoyment is likely to be scanty, and his criticisms will be loud, angry and manifold. But if he know and believe that poetry is the essence of all science, and requires the purest of all studies; if he recollect that the new may not always be the false; that the excellence which can be seen in a moment is not usually a very deep one;

above all, if his own heart be full of feelings and experiences, for which he finds no name and no solution, but which lie in pain imprisoned and unuttered in his breast, till the Word be spoken, the spell that is to unbind them, and bring them forth to liberty and light; then, if I mistake not, he will find that in this Goethe there is a new world set before his eyes; a world of Earnestness and Sport, of solemn cliff and gay plain; some such temple—far inferior, as it may well be, in magnificence and beauty, but a temple of the same architecture—some such temple for the Spirit of our age, as the Shakspeares and Spensers have raised for the Spirit of theirs.

This seems a bold assertion: but it is not made without deliberation, and such conviction as it has stood within my means to obtain. If it invite discussion, and forward the discovery of the truth in this matter, its best purpose will be answered. Goethe's genius is a study for other minds than have yet seriously engaged with it among us. By and by, apparently ere long, he will be tried and judged righteously; he himself, and no cloud instead of him; for he comes to us in such a questionable shape, that silence and neglect will not always serve our purpose. England, the chosen home of justice in all its senses, where the humblest merit has been acknowledged, and the highest fault not unduly punished, will do no injustice to this extraordinary man. And if, when her impartial sentence has been pronounced and sanctioned, it shall appear that Goethe's earliest admirers have wandered too far into the language of panegyric, I hope it may be reckoned no unpardonable sin. It is spirit-stirring rather than spirit-sharpening, to consider that there is one of the Prophets here with us in our own day: that a man who is to be numbered with the Sages and *Sacri Vates*, the Shakspeares, the Tassos, the Cervanteses of the world, is looking on the things which we look on, has dealt with the very thoughts which we have to deal with, is reigning in serene dominion over the perplexities and contradictions in which we are still painfully entangled.

That Goethe's mind is full of inconsistencies and shortcomings, can be a secret to no one who has heard of the Fall of Adam. Nor would it be difficult, in this place, to muster a long catalogue of darknesses defacing our perception of this brightness: but it might be still less profitable than it is difficult; for in Goethe's writings, as in those of all true masters, an apparent blemish is apt, after maturer study, to pass into a beauty. His works cannot be judged in fractions, for each of them is conceived and written as a whole; the humble and common may be no less essential there than the high and splendid: it is only Chinese pictures that have no shade. There is a maxim, far better known than practised, that to detect faults is a much lower occupation than to recognise merits. We may add also, that though far easier in the execution, it is not a whit more certain in the result. What is the detecting of a fault, but the feeling of an incongruity, of a contradiction, which may exist in ourselves as well as in the object? Who shall say in which? None but he who sees this object as it is, and himself as he is. We have all heard

of the critic fly; but none of us doubts the compass of his own vision. It is thus that a high work of art, still more that a high and original mind, may at all times calculate on much sorriest criticism. In looking at an extraordinary man, it were good for an ordinary man to be sure of *seeing* him, before attempting to *oversee* him. Having ascertained that Goethe is an object deserving study, it will be time to censure his faults when we have clearly estimated his merits; and if we are wise judges, not till then.

Whether this work of *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*[15] will exalt or depress our actual judgment of him, I pretend not to predict. Like all Goethe's works, its immediate reception is doubtful, or rather, perhaps, it is not doubtful. That these *Travels* will surprise and disappoint the reader, is too likely; and perhaps the reader of the *Apprenticeship* will be more surprised than any other. The book is called a romance; but it treats not of romance characters or subjects; it has less relation to Fielding's *Tom Jones* than to Spenser's *Faëry Queen*. The scene is not laid on this firm Earth, but in a fair Utopia of Art and Science and free Activity: the figures, light and aëriform, come unlooked for, and melt away abruptly, like the pageants of Prospero in his enchanted Island. Whether this the baseless fabric of their vision is beautiful and significant like his, or vague and false, our readers are now to determine. To a reader of the original this question may appear already pretty well decided: in both languages, it is true, the work is still a fragment, hanging suspended in middle air; but the matchless graces of its workmanship, the calm fulness, the noble simplicity of its style, are, in many points, for the one language only.

Nevertheless, I present this work to the English people without reluctance or misgivings, persuaded that though it may be caviare to the general, there are not wanting tastes among us to discern its worth and worthlessness, even under its present disadvantages, and to pronounce truly on both. Of his previous reception in this country neither Goethe nor his admirers have reason to complain. By all men who have any pretension to depth or sensibility of mind, the existence of a high and peculiar genius has been cheerfully recognised in him; a fact which, considering the unwonted and in many points forbidding aspect of his chief works,

[15] *Wanderjahre* denotes the period which a German artisan is, by law or usage, obliged to pass in travelling, to perfect himself in his craft, after the conclusion of his *Lehrjahre* (Apprenticeship), and before his Mastership can begin. In many guilds this custom is as old as their existence, and continues still to be indispensable: it is said to have originated in the frequent journeys of the German Emperors to Italy, and the consequent improvement observed in such workmen among their menials as had attended them thither. Most of the guilds are what is called *geschenkten*, that is, *presenting*, having presents to give to needy *wandering* brothers. This word *Wanderjahre* I have been obliged to translate by *Travels*, after in vain casting about for an expression that should more accurately represent it. Our mechanics have a word much nearer the mark: but this was never printed; and must not be printed, for the first time, here.

does honour both to the author and his critics; while their often numerous and grave objections have proved only that they had studied him with the cursory eye, which may suffice for cursory writers, but for him is not sufficient, nor likely to be final. In no quarter has there appeared any tendency to wilful unfairness, any jealousy as towards a stranger, any disposition to treat him otherwise than according to his true deserts. Indeed, wherefore should there? We of England have of all nations, past and present, the least cause to be jealous with this mean jealousy. Our own literature is peopled with kingly names; our language is beautiful with their English intellects and English characters; their works live forever in our hearts. If we cannot love and hold fast our own, and yet be just to others, who is there that can? In soliciting and anticipating a true estimate of Goethe, I have only to wish that the same sentiments may continue with us.

For the rest, if it seem that I advocate this cause too warmly; that Goethe's genius, whether it be good or bad, is in truth a very small concern to us, I may be allowed to remind my readers, that the existence or non-existence of a new Poet for the World in our own time, of a new Instructor and Preacher of Truth to all men, is really a question of more importance to us than many that are agitated with far greater noise.

No. 3.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION OF MEISTER'S APPRENTICESHIP AND MEISTER'S TRAVELS.

[London, 1839.]

THESE two Translations, *Meister's Apprenticeship* and *Meister's Travels*, have long been out of print, but never altogether out of demand; nay, it would seem, the originally somewhat moderate demand has gone on increasing, and continues to increase. They are therefore here republished; and the one being in some sort a sequel to the other, though in rather unexpected sort, they are now printed together. The English version of *Meister's Travels* has been extracted, or extricated, from a Compilation of very various quality named *German Romance;* and placed by the side of the *Apprenticeship*, its forerunner, which, in the translated as in the original state, appeared hitherto as a separate work.

In the *Apprenticeship*, the first of these Translations, which was executed some fifteen years ago, under questionable auspices, I have made many little changes; but could not, unfortunately, change it into a right translation: it hung, in many places, stiff and laboured, too like some unfortunate buckram cloak round the light harmonious movement of the original; and, alas, still hangs so, here and there; and may now

hang. In the second Translation, *Meister's Travels*, two years later in date, I have changed little or nothing: I might have added much; for the Original, since that time, was as it were taken to pieces by the Author himself in his last years, and constructed anew; and in the Final Edition of his Works appears with multifarious intercalations, giving a great expansion both of size and of scope. Not Pedagogy only, and Husbandry and Art and Religion and Human Conduct in the Nineteenth Century, but Geology, Astronomy, Cotton-spinning, Metallurgy, Anatomical Lecturing, and much else, are typically shadowed forth in this second form of the *Travels;* which, however, continues a Fragment like the first, significantly pointing on all hands towards infinitude; not more complete than the first was, or indeed perhaps less so. It will well reward the trustful student of Goethe to read this new form of the *Travels;* and see how in that great mind, beaming in mildest mellow splendour, beaming if also trembling, like a great sun on the verge of the horizon, near now to its long farewell, all these things were illuminated and illustrated: but for the mere English reader there are probably in our prior edition of the *Travels* already novelties enough; for us, at all events, it seemed unadvisable to meddle with it farther at present.

Goethe's position towards the English Public is greatly altered since these Translations first made their appearance. Criticisms, near the mark, or farther from the mark, or even altogether far, and away from any mark; of these there has been enough. These pass on their road; the man and his works remain what they are and were; more and more recognisable for what they are. Few English readers can require now to be apprised that these two Books, named Novels, come not under the Minerva-Press category, nor the Ballantyne-Press category, nor any such category; that the Author is one whose secret, by no means worn upon his sleeve, will never, by any ingenuity, be got at in that way.

For a Translator, in the present case, it is enough to reflect that he who imports into his own country any true delineation, a rationally spoken word on any subject, has done well. Ours is a wide world, peaceably admitting many different modes of speech. In our wide world there is but one altogether fatal personage,—the dunce; he that speaks *ir*rationally, that sees not, and yet thinks he sees. A genuine seer and speaker, under what conditions soever, shall be welcome to us: has he not *seen* somewhat, of great Nature our common Mother's bringing forth; seen it, loved it, laid his heart open to it and to the Mother of it, so that he can now rationally speak it for us? He is our brother, and a good not a bad man; his words are like gold, precious, whether stamped in our mint, or in what mint soever stamped.

T. CARLYLE.

APPENDIX II.

FRACTIONS.

[1823-1833.]

No. 1. TRAGEDY OF THE NIGHT-MOTH.

Magna ausus.

'Tis placid midnight, stars are keeping
Their meek and silent course in heaven;
Save pale recluse, for knowledge seeking,
All mortal things to sleep are given.

But see! a wandering Night-moth enters,
Allured by taper gleaming bright;
A while keeps hovering round, then ventures
On Goethe's mystic page to light.

With awe she views the candle blazing;
A universe of fire it seems
To moth-*savante* with rapture gazing,
Or Fount whence Life and Motion streams.

What passions in her small heart whirling,
Hopes boundless, adoration, dread;
At length her tiny pinions twirling,
She darts, and—puff!—the moth is dead!

The sullen flame, for her scarce sparkling,
Gives but one hiss, one fitful glare;
Now bright and busy, now all darkling,
She snaps and fades to empty air.

Her bright gray form that spread so slimly,
Some fan she seemed of pigmy Queen;
Her silky cloak that lay so trimly,
Her wee, wee eyes that looked so keen,

Last moment here, now gone forever,
To nought are passed with fiery pain;
And ages circling round shall never
Give to this creature shape again!

Poor moth! near weeping I lament thee,
Thy glossy form, thy instant woe;
'Twas zeal for 'things too high' that sent thee
From cheery earth to shades below.

Short speck of boundless Space was needed
For home, for kingdom, world to thee!
Where passed unheeding as unheeded
Thy little life from sorrow free.

But syren hopes from out thy dwelling
Enticed thee, bade thee earth explore,—
Thy frame, so late with rapture swelling,
Is swept from earth forevermore!

Poor moth! thy fate my own resembles:
Me too a restless asking mind
Hath sent on far and weary rambles,
To seek the good I ne'er shall find.

Like thee, with common lot contented,
With humble joys and vulgar fate,
I might have lived and ne'er lamented,
Moth of a larger size, a longer date!

But Nature's majesty unveiling
What seem'd her wildest, grandest charms,
Eternal Truth and Beauty hailing,
Like thee, I rushed into her arms.

What gained we, little moth? Thy ashes,
Thy one brief parting pang may show:
And thoughts like these, for soul that dashes
From deep to deep, are—death more slow!

No. 2. CUI BONO.

What is Hope? A smiling rainbow
Children follow through the wet;
'Tis not here, still yonder, yonder:
Never urchin found it yet.

What is Life? A thawing iceboard
On a sea with sunny shore;—
Gay we sail; it melts beneath us;
We are sunk, and seen no more.

What is Man? A foolish baby,
Vainly strives, and fights, and frets;
Demanding all, deserving nothing;—
One small grave is what he gets.

No. 3. FOUR FABLES.

I.

Once upon a time, a man, somewhat in drink belike, raised a dreadful outcry at the corner of the market-place, "That the world was all turned topsy-turvy; that the men and cattle were all walking with their feet uppermost; that the houses and earth at large (if they did not mind it) would fall into the sky; in short, that unless prompt means were taken, things in general were on the high road to the Devil." As the people only laughed at him, he cried the louder and more vehemently; nay, at last, began objuring, foaming, imprecating; when a good-natured auditor, going up, took the orator by the haunches, and softly inverting *his* position, set him down—on his feet. The which upon perceiving, his mind was staggered not a little. "Ha! deuce take it!" cried he, rubbing his eyes, "so it was not the world that was hanging by its feet, then, but I that was standing on my head!"

Censor, *Castigator morum*, Radical Reformer, by whatever name thou art called! have a care; especially if thou art getting loud!

PILPAY JUNIOR.

II.

"Gentlemen," said a conjuror, one fine starry evening, "these heavens are a *deceptio visûs;* what you call stars are nothing but fiery motes in the air. Wait a little, I will clear them off, and show you how the matter is." Whereupon the artist produced a long syringe of great force; and, stooping over the neighbouring puddle, filled it with mud and dirty water, which he then squirted with might and main against the zenith. The wiser of the company unfurled their umbrellas; but most part, looking up in triumph, cried, "Down with delusion! It is an age of science! Have we not tallow-lights, then?" Here the mud and dirty water fell, and bespattered and beplastered these simple persons, and even put out the eyes of several, so that they never saw the stars any more.

Enlightened Utilitarian! art thou aware that this patent logic-mill of thine, which grindeth with such a clatter, is but a mill?

P. J.

III.

"It is I that support this household," said a hen one day to herself; "the master cannot breakfast without an egg, for he is dyspeptical and would die, and it is I that lay it. And here is this ugly poodle, doing nothing earthly, and gets thrice the victual I do, and is caressed all day! By the Cock of Minerva, they shall give me a double portion of oats, or they have eaten their last egg!" But much as she cackled and creaked, the scullion would not give her an extra grain; whereupon, in dudgeon, she hid her next egg in the dunghill, and did nothing but cackle and creak all day. The scullion suffered her for a week, then (by order) drew her neck, and purchased other eggs at sixpence the dozen.

Man! why frettest thou and whinest thou? This blockhead is happier than thou, and still a blockhead?—Ah, sure enough, thy wages are too low! Wilt thou *strike work* with Providence, then, and force him to 'an alternative'? Believe it, he will do without thee: *il n'y a point d'homme nécessaire.* P. J.

IV.

"What is the use of thee, thou gnarled sapling?" said a young larch-tree to a young oak. "I grow three feet in a year, thou scarcely as many inches, I am straight and taper as a reed, thou straggling and twisted as a loosened withe."—"And thy duration," answered the oak, "is some third part of man's life, and I am appointed to flourish for a thousand years. Thou art felled and sawed into paling, where thou rottest and art burned after a single summer; of me are fashioned battle-ships, and I carry mariners and heroes into unknown seas."

The richer a nature, the harder and slower its development. Two boys were once of a class in the Edinburgh grammar-school: John ever trim, precise and dux; Walter ever slovenly, confused and dolt. In due time John became Baillie John of Hunter-square, and Walter became Sir Walter Scott of the Universe.

The quickest and completest of all vegetables is the cabbage.

P. J.

No. 4. THE SOWER'S SONG.

Now hands to seedsheet, boys,
We step and we cast; old Time's on wing;
And would ye partake of Harvest's joys,
The corn must be sown in Spring.
Fall gently and still, good corn,
Lie warm in thy earthy bed;
And stand so yellow some morn,
For beast and man must be fed.

Old Earth is a pleasure to see
In sunshiny cloak of red and green;
The furrow lies fresh; this Year will be
As Years that are past have been
Fall gently, &c.

Old Mother, receive this corn,
The son of Six Thousand golden sires:
All these on thy kindly breast were born;
One more thy poor child requires.
Fall gently, &c.

Now steady and sure again,
And measure of stroke and step we keep;
Thus up and thus down we cast our grain:
Sow well, and you gladly reap.
Fall gently and still, good corn,
Lie warm in thy earthy bed;
And stand so yellow some morn,
For beast and man must be fed.

No. 5. ADIEU.

Let time and chance combine, combine,
Let time and chance combine;
The fairest love from heaven above,
That love of yours was mine,
My dear,
That love of yours was mine.

The past is fled and gone, and gone,
The past is fled and gone;
If nought but pain to me remain,
I'll fare in memory on,
My dear,
I'll fare in memory on.

The saddest tears must fall, must fall,
The saddest tears must fall;
In weal or woe, in this world below,
I love you ever and all,
My dear,
I love you ever and all.

A long road full of pain, of pain,
A long road full of pain;
One soul, one heart, sworn ne'er to part,—
We ne'er can meet again,
My dear,
We ne'er can meet again.

Hard fate will not allow, allow,
Hard fate will not allow;
We blessed were as the angels are,—
Adieu forever now,
My dear,
Adieu forever now.

No. 6. THE BEETLE.

Poor hobbling Beetle, needst not haste;
Should Traveller Traveller thus alarm?
Pursue thy journey through the waste,
Not foot of mine shall work thee harm.

Who knows what errand grave thou hast,
'Small family'—that have not dined?
Lodged under pebble, there they fast,
Till head of house have raised the wind!

Man's bread lies 'mong the feet of men;
For cark and moil sufficient cause!
Who cannot sow would reap;—and then
In Beetledom are no Poor-Laws.

And if thy Wife and thou agree
But ill, as like when short of victual,
I swear, the Public Sympathy
Thy fortune meriteth, poor Beetle.

Alas, and I should do thee skaith,
To realms of Night with heeltap send
Who judg'd thee worthy pains of Death?—
On Earth, save me, without a Friend!

Pass on, poor Beetle, venerable
Art thou, were wonders ne'er so rife;
Thou hast what Bel to Tower of Babel
Not gave: the chief of wonders,—LIFE.

Also of 'ancient family,'
Though small in size, of feature dark!
What Debrett's Peer surpasseth thee?
Thy Ancestor was in Noah's Ark.

No. 7. TODAY.

So here hath been dawning
Another blue Day:
Think wilt thou let it
Slip useless away.

Out of Eternity
This new Day is born;
Into Eternity,
At night, will return.

Behold it aforetime
No eye ever did:
So soon it forever
From all eyes is hid.

Here hath been dawning
Another blue Day:
Think wilt thou let it
Slip useless away.

No. 8. FORTUNA.

The wind blows east, the wind blows west,
And the frost falls and the rain:
A weary heart went thankful to rest,
And must rise to toil again, 'gain,
And must rise to toil again.

The wind blows east, the wind blows west,
And there comes good luck and bad;
The thriftiest man is the cheerfulest;
'Tis a thriftless thing to be sad, sad,
'Tis a thriftless thing to be sad.

The wind blows east, the wind blows west;
Ye shall know a tree by its fruit:
This world, they say, is worst to the best;—
But a dastard has evil to boot, boot,
But a dastard has evil to boot.

The wind blows east, the wind blows west;
What skills it to mourn or to talk?
A journey I have, and far ere I rest;
I must bundle my wallets and walk, walk,
I must bundle my wallets and walk.

The wind does blow as it lists alway;
Canst thou change this world to thy mind?
The world will wander its own wise way;
I also will wander mine, mine,
I also will wander mine.

SUMMARY.

JEAN PAUL FRIEDRICH RICHTER.

A WELL-WRITTEN life almost as rare as a well-spent one. Döring's *Gallery of Weimar Authors:* his helpless biographical method: No pique against him, poor man. His *No-Life of Richter.* (p. 1.)—Jean Paul little known out of Germany. The leading events of his life: Personal characteristics. His multifarious Works. (5.)—Must be studied as well as read. Eccentricities: Every work embaled in some fantastic wrappage. Not affectation: Consistent enough from his own point of vision. (9.)—Intellect, imagination and humour: Sport the element in which his nature lived and worked. He loved all living with the heart of a brother. True Humour a kind of inverse sublimity, exalting into our affections what is lowly: In this quality Richter excels all German authors. (13.)—All *genuine* things are what they ought to be: A harmonious development of being, the object of all true culture. Richter's worst faults nearly allied to his best merits. (16.)—Imperfection of his Novels: A true work of art requires to be *fused* in the mind of its creator. Chiefly successful in his humorous characters, and with his heroines. His *Dreams.* His Philosophy not mechanical. Richter, in the highest sense of the word, religious: the martyr Fearlessness combined with the martyr Reverence. Extract from *Quintus Fixlein:* A Summer Night. Richter's value as a writer. (18.)

STATE OF GERMAN LITERATURE.

Franz Horn's merits as a literary Historian. (p. 22.)—French scepticism about German literature. Duty of judging justly: Human Society, at the present era, struggling to body itself forth anew: Necessity for an open mind. The French mind conspicuously shut: English ignorance of Germany accounted for. Difficulty of judging rightly the character of a foreign people. The Germans in particular have been liable to misrepresentation. Madame de Staël's *Allemagne* did much to excite a reasonable curiosity: Promise of better knowledge and friendlier intercourse. (24.)—Groundless or half-grounded objections to German literature. The Germans supposed to have a radically bad taste: Of what section of their literature this is true. The first condition of any real criticism, a transposition of the critic into the author's point of vision. The notion that outward poverty necessarily tends to inward meanness and unsightliness. True taste and culture, and loving insight into truth and nobleness, not the peculiar possession of any rank: Claude Lorraine, Shakspeare, and many others. The spirit of Mammon has a wide empire, but must not be worshipped in the Holy of Holies. (30.)—The German authors better situated, and also show less care for wealth, than many of our own. The German nobility not insensible to genius: Goethe. The English might even learn of them in this respect. The Germans not defective in taste: English and German dulness contrasted. National taste can only be judged from its perennial models: Wieland, Klopstock, Lessing, the two Jacobis, Mendelssohn and others. (36.)—Germany far in advance of other nations. The highest Criticism an interpreter between the inspired and the uninspired. Every literature of the world has been cultivated by the Germans. Essence and origin of Poetic Beauty. (43.)—Bread-artists, and lovers of 'fame.' Schiller's noble idea of a true Artist: Fichte's. The plastic arts: Specimen of Goethe's pictorial criticism. (48.)—High aspiration and earnest insight of German Poetry: Goethe. Growth of German literature parallel with that of our own: Utilitarianism: Passional extravagance. Byron in his youth what Schiller and Goethe had been in theirs. If Germany has gained the true path, we too shall find it. (53.)—German literature vaguely objected to for its Mysticism; *Mystical* generally meaning *not understood.* Things visible and invisible: Methods of teaching suitable to each. Tendencies to real mysticism; a George Fox or Jacob Böhme. (59.)—Absurdity of styling Kant a

mystic: Distinctness and rigid sequence of his conceptions. Parlour-fire Philosophy of mind little valued in Germany. True claims of Kant, Schelling and Fichte. High worth of the Critical Philosophy. British inductive Philosophy since the time of Hume: Dugald Stewart: The German eductive method. The Kantian distinction between Understanding and Reason. Charge of 'Irreligion.' (63.)—Superiority of the recent Poetry of Germany. A little light precious in great darkness. Present ominous aspect of spiritual Europe. Religion and Poetry can never die, however little their voice may be heeded: Happy the man or nation that can hear the tidings they are forever bringing, and can profit by them. (72.)

LIFE AND WRITINGS OF WERNER.

The charm of 'fame.' Werner's tumultuous career indicative of much in the history of his time. (p. 74.)—Hitzig's Lives of Werner and Hoffmann. Werner's birth and parentage: Early connexion with the theatre. Left at fourteen, by his father's death, to the sole charge of his mother. Her hypochondria. Coincidences of Werner's and Hoffmann's early circumstances. Werner's dissolute college-life, and desultory strivings. At thirty he had already divorced two wives, and was looking out for a third: Unsteady irrational hopes, and wild enthusiasm of character. (75.)—His early writings singularly contrasted with his later: His French scepticism overlaid with wondrous theosophic garniture. High colloquies in rather questionable fashion. His drama of the *Söhne des Thals:* chiefly interesting as containing a picture of himself. Extracts, in which, with much turnid grandiloquence, he shadows forth his own creed: Scene, Story of the Fallen Master, Opinions and practices of the Templars. Scene, Robert d'Heredon on Destiny and the Resurrection of the body. (78.)—Some account of the Second Part of the *Sons of the Valley:* Scene, Story of Phosphoros. Werner's dramatic talent. His prophetic aspirations. Self-forgetfulness the summary of his moral code. His strange missionary zeal. (90.)—He marries his third wife. His faithful care and affection for his poor mother: her death. His life at Warsaw: Intimacy with Hoffmann. His *Kreuz an der Ostsee:* not suitable for the Stage. His drama of *Martin Luther, oder die Weihe der Kraft.* His portraiture of Luther: Allegorical superfluities, and general insufficiency. (102.)—Dramatic popularity: Vortex of society: Divorced from his third Wife. Strange state of marriage-law. Bedouin wanderings: Sees Goethe, Napoleon and Madame de Staël. His project of a New Religion abandoned. Detestation of modern Protestantism. He visits Italy. Spiritual Exercitations: Returns to the Catholic Faith of his fathers. Ordained a Priest: Preaches with all his might at Vienna and elsewhere, amid much tumult and obloquy. Literary dregs. Drawing nigh to his end: Sleep of Death. Pray, wanderer, for a wanderer's soul. (110.)—Questionable character of his Life and Works. Gigantic endeavour, leading to most dwarfish performance. His change of faith evidently sincere: A melancholy posthumous fragment: No thought of returning to Protestantism. His mysticism and dissoluteness. His belief probably *persuasion* rather than *conviction.* Religious opinion in Germany. We cannot justify Werner, yet let him be condemned with pity. (117.)

GOETHE'S HELENA.

Goethe's tendency to complete whatsoever he began. His complete and final edition of his Works. *Helena*, a classico-romantic Phantasmagoria. Parabolic or half-parabolic character of much that Goethe has written. This style has in many cases its own appropriateness. The grand point to *have* a meaning, the best form will then gather round of its own accord. Beauty and interest of the parabolic style in Goethe's hands. To *read* an author, we must be able to see his object, whatever it may be, as *he* saw it. Everywhere in life, the true question is, not what we *gain*, but what we *do.* No book that will not improve by repeated readings deserves to be read at all. Goethe's works especially require to be so read. (p. 126.)—*Helena* no exception to the rule: Forms part of a continuation of *Faust. Faust* very little known in England, though considerably talked of. Emphatically a work of Art. A wondrous emblem of the little Life of man, encompassed and overlooked by the stupendous All. Unedifying style of English criticism. A better state of things coming. The story of Faust a Christian mythus, in the same sense as that of Prometheus, Titan and the like, are Pagan ones. Various modern embodiments of the story. Friedrich Müller. (131.)—Goethe the first who tried the subject, and the most successful. His Devil a symbol of wicked, irreverent knowledge; of specious logical Life, combined with moral Death: Faust represents the human heart, seeking and striving selfishly

after 'all good.' Consequent greedy disappointment: Bitterness and danger of Isolation: Vain strugglings towards the Impossible. Conflict of moral Life with moral Death. *Faust* a deep poetic stating of the dark questionings which had long brooded over many hearts: Wonderful skill with which this is shadowed forth. The difficulty left unsolved. (134.)—The Faust and Mephistopheles of *Helena:* Change of style and of tone: Notice concerning *Faust* and *Helena* by the Author. Different methods of treating this singular love-episode. How Goethe calls back the Past, and shows it still living in the conscious Present. (141.)—Helena returns to Greece after the destruction of Troy. Her misgivings as to her own fate: her alarm aggravated by Phorcyas. Their primitive deportment, and frank, downright manner of speech. Phorcyas a feminine Mephistopheles. Her malicious sarcasm: Dialogue between Helena and Phorcyas: Helena terrified by Phorcyas into a consent to flee from impending retribution; and the Past of early Greece melts into the Present of the European Middle Ages. (144.)—A wondrous region, neither sea nor good dry land. Helena's reception by Faust: Lynceus, the Warder of the tower. Emblematic adumbrations: Grecian Art, Teutonic Genius, School Philosophy. (156.)—Faust and Helena in high favour with each other. Manners and achievements of the Middle Ages: Grecian influences. Birth of Modern Poetry; Euphorion: Inspired Poesy becomes rapt, inspired Life. Further work for Mephistopheles. (162.)—Final identity of symbol and thing signified. Our Whereabout, not on the firm earth, but on the wide and airy Deep. Claims of Goethe to the reverence and faith of all who would read him wisely. (169.)

GOETHE.

Difficulty of justly estimating the worth of Goethe's works. British ignorance on the subject. Goethe's literary Kingship: his universal and undisputed ascendency. Singular value and interest of his Autobiography: Not written especially for 'persons of quality' in England, but for persons of heart and head in Europe. (p. 172.)—Goethe's unexampled reputation. A man's 'fame' no test of his real worth. In Goethe's writings is embodied the new Wisdom peculiar to the new Time. (178.) Goethe, a man who had struggled toughly: Spiritual growth of his mind as exhibited in his successive Works: he became a Believer, not by denying his unbelief, but by following it out. Unbounded popularity and influence of his two earliest works. Lifeless condition of the literary world previous to the publication of the *Sorrows of Werter.* Germany: England: Influence of Locke. The French had discovered that 'as the stomach secretes chyle, so does the brain secrete thought.' Poetry degraded to a useful stimulant; and Religion to a superfluity by all means to be got rid of: Unbelief pressing with incubus force on the greater part of Europe. (182.)—The Poet a citizen not only of his country, but of his time: *Werter* the cry of that dim, rooted pain, under which thoughtful men everywhere were languishing: Byron's lifeweariness. Specimen of Werter's philosophy. Goethe's own account of the state of mind in which his *Sorrows of Werter* originated. (188.)—His mental growth and attainment of victorious peace, evinced by *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship.* Extract, showing the character and high vocation of the Poet; Goethe's faithfulness to that ideal. English and German criticisms of *Meister.* (194.)—The *Wanderjahre;* its high and melodious wisdom. Extracts, showing Goethe's view of the nature, objects and present ground of Religious Belief; Symbolic picture of the moral culture of Childhood; Reverence; Significance of the Israelitish history; the Divine Life of Christ, as distinguished from his Divine Death; the Sanctuary of Sorrow. (201.)—Few men of his age have arisen so triumphantly as Goethe, above all manner of doubt and discontent, into the freedom of actual belief and clear activity. Among our own poets, Byron alone struggled manfully to the end; and he died while the victory was, at best, only beginning to be gained. Goethe's literary claims: his peculiar emblematic intellect: Entire freedom from mannerism. His spiritual characteristics. Distinction between the original man and the merely popular man. Contrast of Goethe and Voltaire. (210.)—To judge a man rightly, we must see his good qualities before pronouncing on his bad. What we mean by 'a fault.' The highest and noblest beauty of a poem. Goethe's faults. A true Poem not to be judged of by mere *taste.* Happy contractedness of men in general: Fractional and universal standards. A deeper feeling for Art abroad over Europe. Our own ancient noble Literature will one day be studied and felt, as well as talked of. (218.)

APPENDIX I.

No. 1.

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION OF MEISTER'S APPRENTICESHIP.

English self-satisfied ignorance of German Literature. Unfortunate translations. Kotzebue the representative of a nation that despises him. Klopstock's *Messias*, a beautiful poem distorted into a theosophic rhapsody. Goethe, the idol of his countrymen, to us a name signifying nothing. The German *Werter*, with all his faults, a very different person from his English namesake. The charm of *Faust* altogether unconnected with its preternatural framework. Fate of struggling human enthusiasm. Minds like Goethe's the common property of all nations. (p. 223.)—*Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre* presented to the English public. A distinct view of Goethe's matured genius, his manner of thought and favourite subjects. Its popularity in Germany. No mere substitute for the modern novel: Of romance interest there is next to none. A light airy sketch of the development of man: Characters representing distinct classes of men, and various stages of human nature. Schlegel's admiring judgment. Indubitable traces of the greatest genius of our times. Mignon the most perfect poetic creation since Shakspeare. (224.)—The Translator's difficulties: Fidelity his one aim. (227.)

No. 2.

PREFACE AND INTRODUCTIONS TO GERMAN ROMANCE.

Uncounted number and variety of German Novelwriters: Difficulty of making an adequate selection: Chief modes of German Novelwriting. National peculiarities and cosmopolitan vacuity. The light of a small taper may be useful in total darkness. Difficulties of German little more than a bugbear: Its general diffusion among us not far distant. (p. 228.)

MUSÆUS.

Born at Jena. A boy of quick talents and kind lively temper: Adopted and liberally educated by his uncle. Removes to Eisenach. Intended for the Church: Not acceptable as a pastor. His residence at Eisenach not unprofitable: In his twenty-fifth year he became an author; provoked thereto by the unbounded acceptance of our English Richardson: Success of his *German Grandison*, published anonymously. He longed much less for a literary existence than for a civic one; Became Tutor in the Court of Wiemar; married; increased his income by giving private lessons; and grew and waxed strong in contented obscurity. After an interval of nineteen years his iconoclastic faculty was again called forth: His *Physiognomical Travels:* The applause it gained instant and general: The ground was now broken, and he was not long in digging deeper. The rude traditionary fragments of Germany he worked anew into shape and polish: He spared no pains in collecting his materials; and despised no source of intelligence, however mean. His *Volksmährchen;* its comic humour, levity and kind sceptical derision: Lovers of unadulterated primeval poetry may censure Musäus; but they join with the public at large in reading him. His subsequent works; and death. (p. 232.)—Without much effort he stood aloof from every species of cant: He looked upon the world as little else than a boundless Chase, where the wise were to recreate themselves with the hunting of Follies: He could not reverence men; but with all their faults he loved them. He kept himself unspotted from the errors of his time; a merit which posterity is too apt to underrate. Peculiarities of his style: A man of fine and varied talent, but scarcely of any genius. (236.)

FRIEDRICH DE LA MOTTE FOUQUE.

Fouqué's family of French extraction: His Grandfather in high favour with Frederick the Great. Little known of Fouqué's early history. The misfortunes of his country drove him into retirement: Introduced by Schlegel to the study of Spanish

poetry: An ideal of Christian knighthood continually hovered round his fancy. His literary performances all of a chivalry cast. (p. 238.)—His wife a virtuous and gifted woman of kindred genius. In the contest of Prussia with Napoleon he evinced in actual battle the devout and fervid gallantry which he had so often previously delineated in his writings. A pure sensitive heart deeply reverent of Truth and Beauty and Heroic Virtue; and a delicate hand in picturing forth some few forms of these high qualities: To wed that old *sentiment* to modern *thoughts*, was a task he could not attempt. In mental structure Fouqué seems the converse of Musäus. Lightness and simplicity the chief characteristics of his style: The little Tale of *Aslauga's Knight* some tolerable emblem of his peculiar qualities. (241.)

LUDWIG TIECK.

Born at Berlin: His private life little known. His literary life he began in his twenty-second year: Immature products of a strong and fervid genius: Active and positive Goodness soon displaced mere barren and tormenting negatives. His *Volksmährchen* of the most varied character, teeming with wondrous shapes full of meaning; true modern denizens of the old Fairyland. By this work he was first introduced to the notice of his countrymen: His *Der gestiefelte Kater*, a grotesque and hearty satire on the existing aspect of literature. Numerous parodies and lighter pieces: *Letters on Shakspeare*. Marriage. Becomes acquainted with the two Schlegels, Novalis and Wackenroder: Literary coöperation: New School of Poetry. (p. 243.)—Tieck's frequent change of residence: Journey into Italy: Visit to London. His poetic worth: A gay Southern fancy lives in union with a Northern heart: Chaste simplicity, both in conception and style: His *Blaubart*, a group of earnest figures, painted on a laughing ground. In the province of the *Mährchen*, or popular Traditionary Tale, he reigns without a rival. (247.)

E. T. W. HOFFMANN.

A life full of error and perplexed vicissitude. Born at Königsberg: His parents' ill-assorted union, and separation: Remains with his mother. An uncle takes strenuous charge of his education; but cannot take stock of his character. Unwise indulgence more hurtful than leaden constraint. Days of Bedlam jubilee: Successful cunning: Early friendship. Schooling: Music and painting more to his taste than classical studies. Steady preparation for the legal profession. His leisure occupied with music, painting and unsuccessful literary efforts. Entanglements of a love-affair: Quits Königsberg, and proceeds to Great Glogau in Silesia. Tedium and other spiritual maladies: Leaves Silesia for Berlin: Appointed Assessor of the Court of Posen: Removes to Poland. He was now director of his own actions; and unhappily did not direct them well: Habits of irregularity: A practical joke, and consequent banishment to Plozk. Marriage: Domestic peace and official assiduity: Promoted from Plozk to Warsaw. The Polish capital a vast perpetual masquerade to him. Intimacy with Hitzig. Project of erecting a Musical Institution: Hoffmann among the paint-pots. (p. 250.)—The project prospered beyond expectation, till abruptly terminated by the French armies. A sad enough outlook: Visits Berlin in quest of employment. Death of his little Daughter; his Wife dangerously ill: At last obtains an engagement with the managers of the Bamberg stage. Contradiction and disappointment. Commences writing for the *Musicalische Zeitung*. Engagement at Dresden: His life chequered by harder vicissitudes than ever. The revolution of Europe restored to him his former rights of office at Berlin. His situation, after all his buffetings, was now a happy one; and, had he been wise, might have continued so. His sharp temper, transcendent vanity and reckless satire, disqualified him for society; yet he could not do without it: The enjoyment he sought was only to be found at the tavern, among gay laughter-loving topers. His official duties were to the last punctually and irreproachably performed; and he wrote more abundantly than ever. Meanwhile his health at length gave way; and he died a mournful and lingering death; writing, or dictating to an amanuensis to the last. (255.)—Hoffmann's was a mind for which proper culture might have done great things. He loved Art with a deep but scarcely with a pure love; not as the fountain of Beauty, but as the fountain of refined Enjoyment. His head was for ever swarming with beautiful or horrible chimeras. A good or a wise man we must not call him; but, among the ordinary population of this world, to note him with the mark of reprobation were ungrateful and unjust. His genius formed the most important element of his character, and participated in its faults. As a child of his time and his country, he is not to be overlooked in any survey of German Literature. (259.)

JEAN PAUL FRIEDRICH RICHTER.

Richter called from his earthly sojourn since the commencement of his Translator's little task. The materials for his Biography as yet inaccessible. Birth and parentage: Destined for the clerical profession; but preferred literature. Finally settled in Bayreuth: Domestic peace and happiness. His intellectual labours gained him the esteem and love of all ranks of his countrymen. He wrote and thought in a track entirely his own. Not to be understood by a mere cursory perusal. Singularity not always affectation. His works hard to understand; but always have a meaning, and often a true and deep one. (p. 262.)—An impetuous, colossal spirit: Among his gifts, Imagination and Humour the most striking. His Humour as the balm which a generous spirit pours over the wounds of life. His favourite characters have always a dash of the ridiculous in their circumstances or their compositions. In the treatment of heroes proper he is seldom completely happy. Richter a Western Oriental. Few have known the world better, or taken at once a clearer and a kindlier view of its concerns. Nature in all her scenes and manifestations he loved with a deep, almost passionate love. His belief of man's Immortality the sanctuary and solace of his spirit. (265.)—His multifarious and seemingly incongruous Works. To many English readers, a spirit like Richter's cannot but be warmly welcome. (268.)

GOETHE.

Goethe's Autobiography. Born at Frankfort-on-Mayn, 28th August 1749. Favourable circumstances of his family: Healthy, genuine characters of his parents. Destined for the profession of law, could but the ambition of wealth and official celebrity have adequately inspired him. Brightest and blackest forecastings struggling within. His true destination a life of literature: *Götz von Berlichingen* and *Sorrows of Werter*. Goethe's unlooked-for popularity far from affording him the satisfaction he craved: Anxiety, doubt of any sort, can only be removed by Action. (p. 271.)—His connexion with the Court of Weimar. Diversity of his studies and acquisitions: Literary labours. A universal development of our spiritual nature more precious than the solace of our vanity. German Philistines. Goethe's mental faculties ripened and beautified by the advance of age. (274.)—A King of himself and of his world. He has inquired fearlessly; and, while fearlessly denying the false, has not forgotten to search out and admit the true: His assiduous culture proportionate to the bountifulness of his gifts: Composure and cheerful seriousness seem to breathe over all his character. This also is the spirit of our Shakspeare. (278.)—Goethe *not* a German Voltaire: His province high and peculiar. The angels and demons that can lay prostrate our hearts in the nineteenth century must be of another fashion than those which subdued us in the ninth. In Goethe a new world, of Earnestness and Sport, begins to open before us. Inconsistencies and shortcomings. (281.)—*Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre* has less relation to Fielding's *Tom Jones* than to Spenser's *Faëry Queen*. Goethe's reception by English readers. Our own literature peopled with kingly intellects and hearts. A new Poet, and Preacher of Truth to all men. (284.)

No. 3.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION OF MEISTER'S APPRENTICESHIP AND TRAVELS.

English interest in German literature increasing. *Meister's Travels* an unexpected sequel to the *Apprenticeship*. The original taken to pieces by Goethe in his last years, and constructed anew. For the English reader the first edition probably contains novelties enough. Goethe's position towards the English Public now greatly altered. He who imports into his country a rationally spoken word has done well. A true seer and speaker, under whatever conditions, shall be welcome to us. (p. 285.)

APPENDIX II.

FRACTIONS.

No. 1. Tragedy of the Night-Moth.

Waking sympathies between Moths and Bookworms. The fount of Life, and abyss of Danger: A tiny tragedy, Mystic resemblances. What gained we, little moth? (p. 287.)

No. 2. Cui Bono.

What is Hope? What is Life? What is Man? (p. 288.)

No. 3. Four Fables.

I. A Radical Reform successfully accomplished. II. March of Intellect, and general scientific achievements of the utilitarian Squirt. III. Before we try to force Providence to 'an alternative,' it were wise to consider *what* the alternative might be. IV. The richer a nature, the harder and slower its development. (p. 289.)

No. 4. The Sower's Song.

Earth's bounteous coöperation with the labours of her children. (p. 290.

No. 5. Adieu.

The past may be forever present; and the saddest tears must fall. (p. 291.)

No. 6. The Beetle.

A new claimant for Public Sympathy, and the benefits of the Poor-Laws. The chief of wonders' common to the lowliest Beetle and the loftiest Peer. (p. 292.)

No. 7. Today.

Each New Day a new glimpse into Eternity; and a new offer of eternal possibilities. (p. 292.)

No. 8. Fortuna.

The weariest heart may find something to be thankful for; and only a dastard can really come to evil. The journey of life. (p. 293.)

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON: ROBSON AND SONS, PRINTERS, PANCRAS ROAD, N.W.